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TROY SANDERS

Attack of the

MASTODON

IDA NIELSEN, 3RD EYE GIRL

DAVE CLARKE, UNCLE FUNK

NICK SIMPER, DEEP PURPLE

PAZ LENCHANTIN, PIXIES

DAVID HASKINS, BAUHAUS

TC ELECTRONIC HQ REPORT

www.bassguitarmagazine.com UK £4.35 Issue 111 2014

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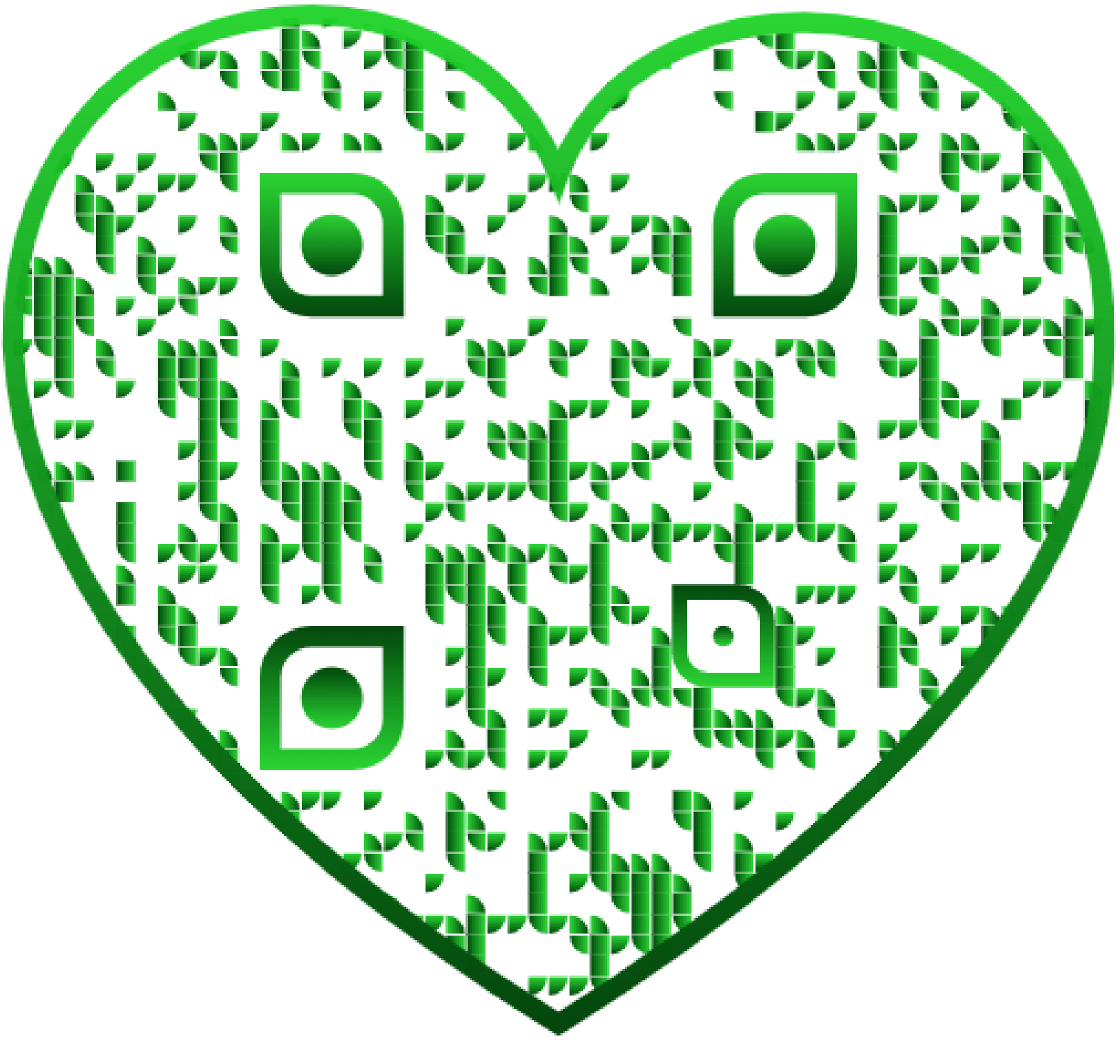

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ISSUE 111 DECEMBER 2014

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SUBSCRIPTION RATE UK £64.20
For all subscription offers and overseas prices visit www.bassguitarmagazine.com or call 01926 339808
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DISTRIBUTION
Distributed to the news trade by Comag Magazine Marketing, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE
PUBLISHED BY
Blaze Publishing Ltd. Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ
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Multitasking: that dreaded word. Like us, you're a bass player, and playing bass correctly and appropriately for your gig is a task in itself. But what happens if you're a singer too? Getting the balance right between holding down the low end and getting the vocals out at the same time is a challenge many of us fail to master. Even worse, what if you're the singer and bassist in one of the planet's most musically versatile, and also most hard-rocking, bands? Ask Troy Sanders of Mastodon, whose extensive interview this month reveals just how tough – and at the same time, how incredibly satisfying – it is to front one of the most inspired bands ever formed.

This issue of *BGM* is packed to the nines with amazing bass stuff, although we say it ourselves. 3rd Eye Girl bassist Ida Nielsen tells us her incredible story, kicking off with a phone call out of the blue from a certain Minneapolis musician known for his love of purple. Then there's alt-rock legend Paz Lenchantin, currently playing bass with the Pixies; Deep Purple's original bassist Nick Simper; goth icon David J Haskins from Bauhaus; and funked-up disco king Dave Clarke. On top of all that, we take a trip to TC Electronic's HQ in Aarhus, Denmark, and review the coolest new bass gear, from the mainstream to the boutique. As ever, our team of world-class reviewers and tutors is here to make you the best bass player you can be – on which note, we've implemented a new in-house formatting system to make our tuition columns even more useful, whether you're new to this bass lark or an old hand.

On a sad note, we bade farewell to the great Jack Bruce in October. His achievements as a musician and in the rock world in general were immense, and all bassists owe him a huge debt. It was a true honour for us to feature Jack as the cover star of *BGM*'s 100th issue, only nine months ago, although we will always regret the bout of ill-health that obliged him to miss his slot at this year's London Bass Guitar Show. Our condolences go to Jack's family.

Joel McIver, editor

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Pic: Kevin Estrada

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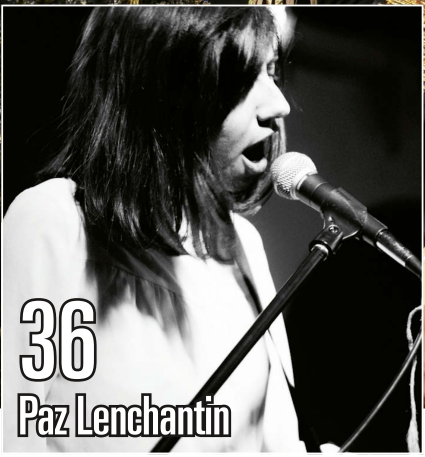

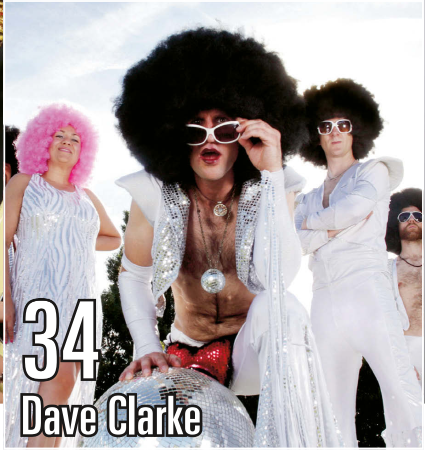

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CHORAL NOTES

Aguilar Amplification, the New York-based amp, pickup and FX specialists, have announced the Chorusaurus bass chorus pedal. As they tell us, "Providing the warm, rich tone that Aguilar gear is famous for, the Chorusaurus uses analogue, bucket-brigade technology for lush, organic chorusing. The Chorusaurus gives bassists unparalleled control of their tone with an intuitive, four-knob layout. Blend controls the ratio of dry and wet signals. The rate, depth and width controls provide maximum tonal sculpting. Now you can dial in subtle swirling textures, extreme chorusing or anything in between." Look out for our review in a forthcoming issue.

Info: www.aguilaramp.com

FAB GEAR!

Visitors to the London Bass Guitar Show 2015 will be thrilled to hear that many of the world's finest gear manufacturers have signed up for the event, to be held at London's Olympia venue on 7 and 8 March. Bass guitar makers **Maruszczyk, Spector, Hofner, Rikkers, Ernie Ball Music Man, Anaconda, AC Guitars, Pedulla** and **Ellio Martina Guitars** will be showing off their newest instruments, while the legendary electronics expert **John East** and his **East Tone** company will be representing the bass amp world along with **Hartke, Aguilar** and **Vanderkley**. *BGM* contributor Stuart Clayton will be there with his **Bassline Publishing** company; one-stop-bass-store **Strings And Things** will be present; as will **Barnes & Mullins and ACM Guildford.** The first artists to sign up – Mark King of Level 42 and Beyoncé's bassist Divinity Roxx – will be wowing the audiences in the live rooms. These are just the first exhibitors and artists to confirm: many more will be announced in forthcoming issues and at www.londonbassguitarshow.com, www.facebook.com/londonbassguitarshow and @bassguitarshow. See you there!

EVE-OLUTION, PART 2

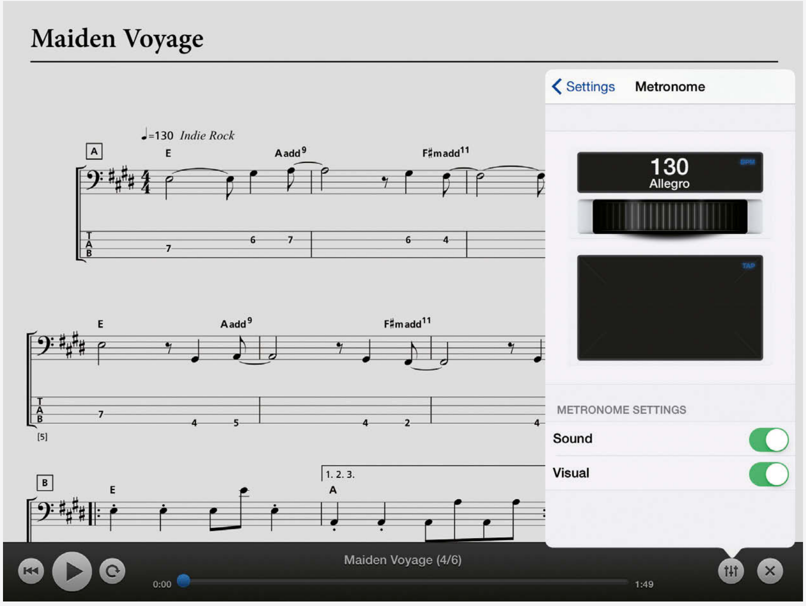
In October 2013, *BGM* offered an Eve ProBass as a competition prize. This superb instrument, designed and hand-built by Scottish luthier Douglas Mullen, was scooped by reader Dick Harding, whose report concludes: "My prize bass really looks the part. The control cavity has been routed from the rear, and four holes drilled through the centre block to attach the bolt-on neck. No fewer than nine different woods, all fully seasoned and dried, are present in the final product. The body of the ProBass has been contoured front and rear, holes drilled for the controls and jack socket, and cavities routed for the pickups and bridge. After staining, the darker colouring really enhances the grain pattern of the Douglas Fir top. The body grain pattern is now even more prominent, and the colouring lighter after application of Eve's BuckleRash oil and wax finish. The Eve Jazz bridge and neck pickups have individual volume controls, and the Eve active gain circuit provides treble boost/cut and bass boost/cut. Overwater medium gauge strings are anchored to a Spector Professional locking bridge, and pass over an ABM adjustable brass nut to sealed gear tuning machines. I'm glad I opted for black hardware: this contrasts beautifully with the lighter body, and complements the black pickups. The bass looks fantastic, and the build quality and finish are absolutely immaculate. The amplified sound quality is superb, quickly and easily varied between deep, chest-caving, window-rattling bass, and a Duane Eddy treble twang, plus all stations in-between, thanks to the Eve Active Gain Tone Circuit System."

www.eveguitars.co.uk

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Rockschool, the rock and pop music exam board, has just launched its exam pieces on a new app, allowing bass guitar teachers and pupils to learn music and prepare for an exam directly from their iPad. The free app, called KR Player, can be used as a practice tool for beginner-to-advanced bassists wanting to get to grips with Rockschool exam pieces, and includes everything they need to work towards their grade exam. The app's functionality includes tempo and key change; the ability to loop entire sections or specific bars; intuitive scrolling and fully adjustable backing tracks. Rockschool is the first exam board in the UK to offer a full app alternative to its grade exam books.

Info: www.rockschool.co.uk/apps



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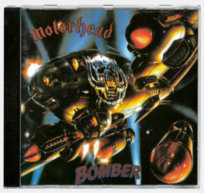
Triumvirate

We select three essential albums from a genre or player.
THIS MONTH: Lemmy

1 *'ACE OF SPADES'* BY MOTÖRHEAD

Not even Lemmy himself would claim to be the world's greatest bassist, but he does what any rockin' player needs to do: powers his band along like there's no tomorrow. This 1980 album features the radio classic 'Ace Of Spades' that shows the ferocity of Lemmy's picking hand with those brutal strummed power chords in the intro. Tracks like 'Love Me Like A Reptile' and '(We Are) The Road Crew' feature driving bass-lines that were instrumental in the development of thrash metal.

2 *'BOMBER'* BY MOTÖRHEAD



Released the year before 'Ace Of Spades', this is a firm fan favourite and home to some of the band's best material. As usual Lemmy's fat, growling tone is taking up huge swathes of the sonic space. The highlight is the meandering but groovy solo on 'Talking Head', but be sure to check out the melodic line under the guitar solo in 'Dead Men Tell No Tales' too. The galloping line on 'Gallop' is also worth the price of admission.

3 *'IRON FIST'* BY MOTÖRHEAD

We're tempted to buy this purely for the album cover, but you should also get it for the high-octane bass. The title track feels a bit like a second rate 'Ace Of Spades', it's true, but the bass is still as gritty as ever. 'America' and '(Don't Let 'Em) Grind You Down' have solid rock bass that everyone can learn from, and the distorted intro riff for (Don't Need) Religion is frankly filthy.

DIRECT LINES

***BGM* was among the guests at a** Bass Direct-sponsored evening with Sandberg Guitars in Leamington Spa a few weeks ago. Holger Sandberg and Reggie Worthy entertained the guests with a presentation about the company's building methods and philosophy, plus a bass jam, with visitors given the chance to examine various basses and the woods that are used to build them. "With over 300,000 variations available through the online configurator, making a custom bass has never been so easy," Sandberg told *BGM*. "We have large stocks of exotic woods in stock, and we pay very high attention to details in all aspects of the bass. Sandberg uses dedicated staff for the ageing the instruments, devoting a whole day for 'hardcore aged' and two days for a masterpiece instrument. We use custom made hardware and pickups on all instruments."

Info: www.bassdirect.co.uk, www.sandberg-guitars.de

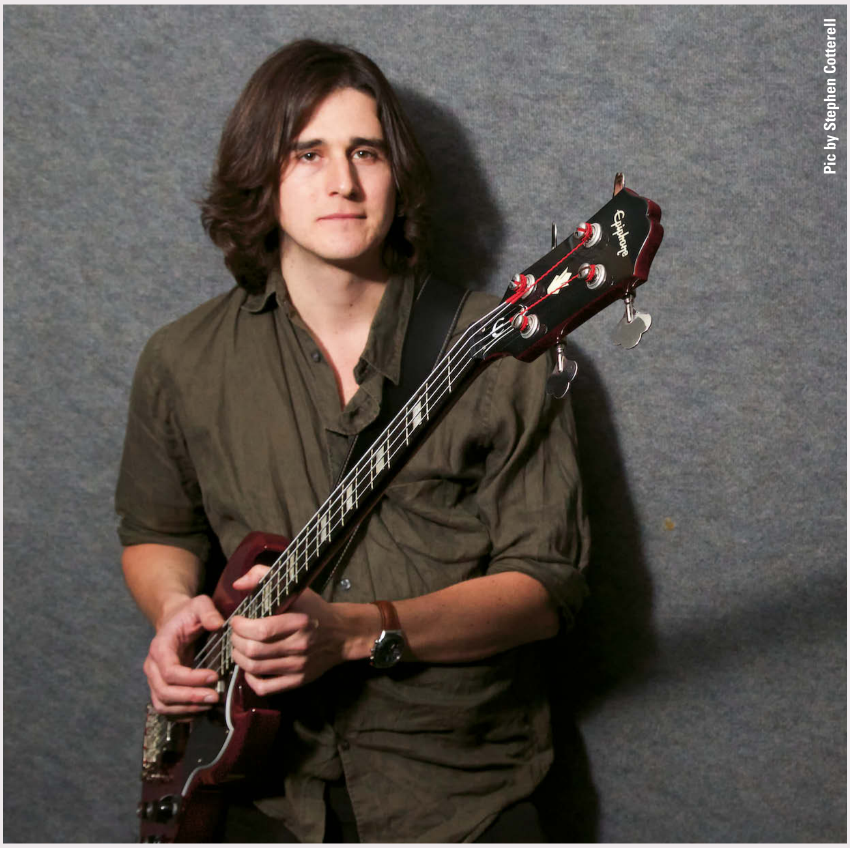
Me And My Bass

In which a *BGM* reader tells us about his or her bass gear...
This month: Ralph Beeby, Cherry White

"I'm the bassist with up-and-coming blues-rock band Cherry White. I've become quite strongly associated with the Epiphone EB-3 that I used on most of our recordings – they're an acquired taste but I rather like them. Currently I run this into an Ashdown Little Bastard 30 with a Laney 1x15 cab, via an Ibanez Bass Tubescreamer, which provides an ideal boost to help my solos cut through. More recently, a Gibson Thunderbird has taken the Epiphone's place as my main bass, and I'm increasingly finding my Hagstrom 8-string useful at certain points in our live set. Our most recent single, 'Don't Hold Me Back', was the debut for our new vocalist, but it was also a chance for me to give the Gibson its first recorded outing!"

Info: www.cherrywhitemusic.com

Want to be in this column? Email joel@blazepublishing.co.uk



Pic by Stephen Cotterell

WIN!

That splendid chap Steve Lawson, Britain's best-known solo bassist, has let us have his *Complete Works* on a USB stick, containing 27 (!) albums, a novel called *Rock And Roll Is Dead* and 45 minutes of live video. It'll normally cost you £25, but you can nab it by answering this easy-peasy question:

Which celebrity recently said 'Rock is dead'?
A Dave Grohl
B Nigella Lawson
C Gene Simmons

Answers to Bass Competition at the usual address or at www.bassguitarmagazine.com/competition by 4 January.

Megadeth bassist David Ellefson's autobiography goes in audiobook format to Ross Sutherland, Mhelissa Anna Dorado and Jeremy Lambert. Thanks to all who entered. **WON!**

DOCTOR FOSTER

Veteran bassist, producer, composer and author Mo Foster was recently recognised at the latest British Composer Awards by the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA). Presented since 1974, the Gold Badge Awards recognise exceptional people from across the music industry that have worked in support of British songwriters and composers. They are an opportunity for BASCA and its members to thank an outstanding group of men and women who have made a unique contribution to British music. Simon Darlow, Chairman of BASCA, said: "BASCA has presented the Gold Badge Awards for 40 years to acknowledge the talent that helps make the British music industry thrive. We take pride in celebrating these incredible Gold Badge Award-winning individuals. It is their inspiration, promotion, performance, commissioning and much, much more that makes the professional landscape for songwriters and composers a better place in which to work." Hats off to Mo!

Revolver

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH: 'Dragon Attack'

Bassist: *John Deacon*
Album: *The Game by Queen*
John Deacon has penned more amazing bass-lines than most of his peers put together, but where's the love? The funky, rolling riff on this track dominates the music, and we love the bass and drum groove that kicks in around 1:45, with that tasty descending run.

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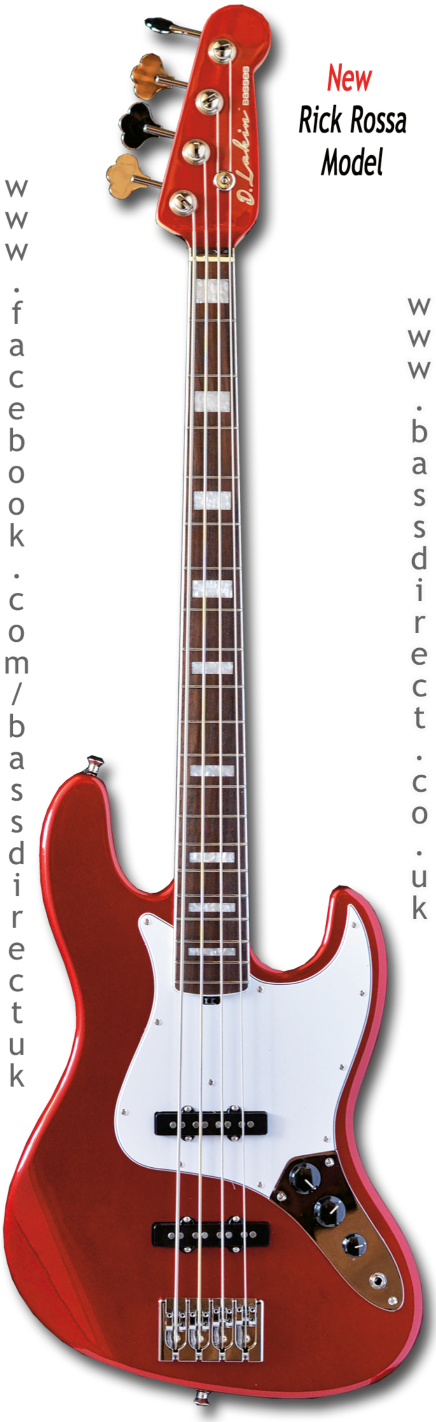

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EVERY MONTH MASTER RESTORER SIMON MCVEIGH TWEAKS A KNACKERED OLD FENDER MUSICMASTER INTO A THING OF BEAUTY. THIS MONTH: UPGRADING THE PICKUP

Well, look what I've found! This is the underrated little Fender Musicmaster, which tends to slip under the radar when you think of 1970s American Fenders. Let's take a closer look at this little gem, which can be picked up for a fraction of the price of its bigger and better known siblings.

I purchased this one for under £500, which is approximately one-third of the price of a Precision or Jazz of the same era. So what do you get for your money? For one thing, this 1978 model is an American-made instrument and it exudes quality. It's a heavy beast for its compact size: the weight makes this bass feel a lot more substantial when you have it on.

I'm an average-sized guy, and this guitar sits comfortably on me, while the neck doesn't require a big stretch for me to get down to the lower end. I admit that when I play a Jazz or Precision bass, I find that reaching for the lower notes is a bit of an ordeal, so I'm happy with my Musicmaster. Not only that, I couldn't have got a better colour than Olympic white, my favourite Fender finish; this one has mellowed nicely to a faded cream colour over the years, while the patina on the hardware is just perfect. I can think of a lot of guitar brands out there that charge you a supplementary cost for this type of aged look.

Now for the downside – there's always a downside!

Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

The pickup and bridge are the weakest links in this chain, which is a shame as everything else on this bass is so good.

The bridge issue has been addressed by one of the previous owners, who replaced it with a Schaller model, anchoring the strings solidly to the body. It looks in scale with the bass body, almost as if it came as part of the original spec.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but according to my research Fender didn't make a pickup for this bass. Instead, they used surplus Stratocaster pickups, simply disguising them as four-pole bass pickups. Why is this not ideal? A hundred reasons spring immediately to mind.

Here is our problem. We have a lovely little piece of American Fender vintage at a bargain price, but if we want a working bass that we can comfortably bring to a session, there is only one thing to do – upgrade the pickup. There are plenty of retrofit replacements out there, as the market has responded to this problem in the last few years. These promise all sorts of benefits, but the big advantage that all these replacements have is that they are made to fit the cavity of this bass: there is no cutting involved. I have chosen a modestly priced Seymour Duncan Bassline pickup at £50.

The procedure couldn't be simpler. Just unsolder the old pickup, solder the two wires of the new one in the same position, reinstate the new pickup in the same position and that's it. Remember to keep the old one, as you and I both know that when you go to sell a bass, originality is key.

See you next month for more Musicmaster fun. To any disbelievers out there who say that you can't get the same bottom end from this bass as you get from its big brothers, I say: 'Go tweak your graphic'. That's not a euphemism of any kind: it just means turn up the bass on your amp. Until next time!

Total spend: £790 (not bad for a bass of this quality)
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THE BISCUIT'$ BA$$ BU$INE$$

THIS MONTH, BASS TUTOR AND SESSION REGULAR GARY 'BISCUIT' BENNETT DISCUSSES WHAT IT TAKES TO BECOME ESTABLISHED AS A PROFESSIONAL BASS TEACHER

Good to be back with you all once again! In this issue I wanted to elaborate on various possible routes towards a role as a bass teacher, and on how to go about gaining more students in the future. Firstly, I advise that you consider joining the Musicians' Union from the outset. The MU is able to supply professional advice about teaching in an ongoing capacity, as well as providing you with advice about public liability cover and instrument insurance, both of which you will find invaluable once you venture into a music teaching career.

The MU will also provide you with an information package called *The Teacher's Toolkit*, which contains information on subject headers such as 'Career Opportunities', 'In The Workplace', 'In The Lesson', 'Understanding The Needs Of Students' and so on. You will also have access to their quarterly journal *The Musician*, featuring a wealth of information on the latest goings-on in the music industry. Visit www.musiciansunion.org.uk for more info.

To get started, advertise your services on as many internet sites as possible. Post an advert at Gumtree, Basschat, and Music Gateway, together with First Tutors and MusicTeachers.co.uk. Post flyers and hand out business cards in music shops and studios in your area. Make sure that you highlight your best qualities and specialities, and explain why people should choose you as their bass teacher rather than anyone else.

Consider the Rockschool bass course. Rockschool is an accredited provider of rock exams worldwide, and their graded music exams, diplomas and vocational qualifications are taught the world over. There are nine Rockschool books available, from debuting bassists to Grade 8, all of which contain an accompanying audio CD. Their prices vary, but they're well worth the price when you consider what a student needs to achieve in the long run. For further information, check out www.rockschool.co.uk.

Well, that's it for this short series of columns. I hope you've enjoyed my advice and thanks for reading. Let's hope that bass business flourishes for you all in 2015, and I'll see you at the London Bass Guitar Show!

Gary 'Biscuit' Bennett is a freelance bass guitarist and tutor, covering Essex, London and the south-east, with many years of experience in the music industry under his belt. His CV includes hundreds of live performances and many domestic and international recording sessions. Awarded the title of Hartke's 'Best Unsigned Bass Player Worldwide 2008', Biscuit is currently an endorsing artist for Hartke, D'Addario, Planet Waves, Boss, Essential Sound Products and Hypnotic. Contact: @biscuitisation

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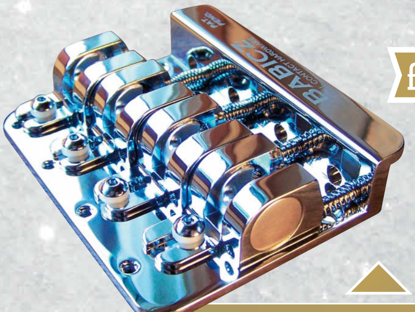

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BASSICALLY SPEAKING

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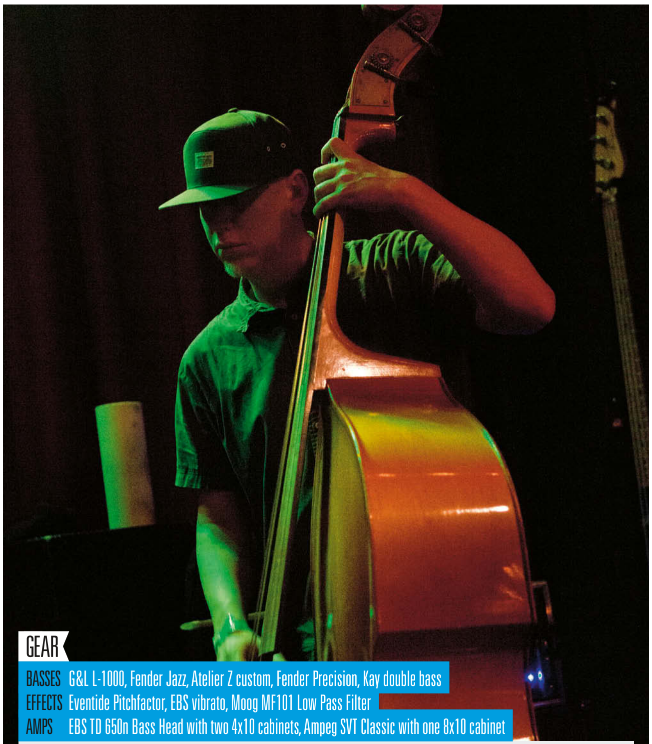

GEAR
BASSES G&L L-1000, Fender Jazz, Atelier Z custom, Fender Precision, Kay double bass
EFFECTS Eventide Pitchfactor, EBS vibrato, Moog MF101 Low Pass Filter
AMPS EBS TD 650n Bass Head with two 4x10 cabinets, Ampeg SVT Classic with one 8x10 cabinet

JOSH WERNER, HELIO PARALLAX

I would describe my bass style as deep pocket dub, melodic cosmic funk, and hard bop afro-psychedelic free rock. I choose four-string bass because less is more. I have built my concept around the creation and acknowledgement of space. Some very heavy artists and players built the foundation of this concept. I'm not opposed to trying out new sounds and guitars, I do like that low B string, but I'm personally not interested in the higher string options. I really enjoy and respect 'thumpers' like Bootsy and Larry Graham. They had so much pocket in their respective techniques, but it's never been something I've been drawn to aesthetically. I think drummers like it because it's percussive and rhythmically stimulating.

> "I CHOOSE FOUR-STRING BASS BECAUSE LESS IS MORE. I HAVE BUILT MY CONCEPT AROUND THE CREATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SPACE. SOME VERY HEAVY ARTISTS AND PLAYERS BUILT THE FOUNDATION OF THIS CONCEPT"

That said, most slap bass I hear is not so in the pocket. There are notable exceptions, of course, but for me, it's not an option artistically speaking. The secret of playing bass well is locking with the drummer, having solid technique and fundamentals, keeping great time, having your own sound and vision, understanding melodies and rhythms, understanding your singer's strengths and limitations, being original and playing with a purpose, every note must mean something. The best bassist ever? This is the kind of question I enjoy on a long tour, I like to start spirited debates on music and hear cats' educated opinions. That being said, music is not sports. Rankings and statistics for musicians are useless, pop gigs and famous songs mean nothing in the spiritual realm. Somewhere in the world someone we've never heard of is slaying a gig right now. I guess I'd vote for that person… Helio Parallax will be playing select US dates this fall. The album is available as CD and vinyl in stores and online (Amazon, iTunes), and through MOD Technologies.

www.mod-technologies.com

GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision
EFFECTS Sansamp
AMPS Gallien-Krueger heads, Ampeg cabs

HOYA ROC, MADBALL

It's all about that groove. It's not about being heard as much as it has to do with being felt. I want the floor to drop out from under you if I stop playing. I'm the type of bass player who wants you to feel the music. I never cared about being super technical but always wanted people to feel that groove. Just follow the drums and sit in that pocket. I think a lot of bass players want to show off and try to do too much. It's all about giving a song the groove and not worrying so much about playing 100 notes in between. My bass heroes are James Jamerson and Geezer Butler: two of the greatest musicians ever in heavy music and R&B. They both had flavour and both played with an attitude, that's what bass is all about – they were two guys that wrote the book on sitting in the pocket. It doesn't matter if it's heavy music or pop: it's something you feel and without the bass you'll never feel it. I recorded eight full albums and many EPs using only two strings. My main concern was always locking in with the drums. I'm not putting down bass players that are very technical, I salute them, but my main concern is having a track groove and complementing everything else. The rest usually falls into place.

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GEAR
BASSES Warwick, Tobias, Fender
EFFECTS Radial JD7 Injector
AMPS Mesa Boogie 400+, Ampeg Pro 2, Ampeg HPC-SVT cabs

STEVE MCGRATH, BILLY IDOL

I started playing bass guitar in 1972. My first bass was a copy of a Hofner Beatle bass and I played it left-handed like Sir Paul McCartney, but had the strings strung 'righty'. I grew up listening (and singing) to pop radio, and I also listen to a lot of Motown. James Jamerson's bass grooves have greatly influenced my approach to music. As far as my style goes, these two legendary bass players are still the standard. If I had to pick a favorite bassist, John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin would have to be included, his playing took me to another level. Over the years I've played many genres of music – it was self-defence really. In order to keep working I learned to adapt my bass playing from rock, bluegrass, funk, country, metal, 'old standards' and even disco. These kinds of music require different instruments and techniques. I still do cover gigs and love to play funk. Tone is in the fingers: Steve Stevens told me about the time that he played Eddie Van Halen's guitar and touring rig and you would think he would have sounded like Eddie, but it didn't sound the same. And that's the fun part: everybody's sound is different. I think the secret is to practise as much as you can, write your own music and develop your own sound. Woodshedding other people's songs in order to get your chops up and jam doesn't hurt either. I'm currently playing with Billy Idol in support of his new album *Kings And Queens Of The Underground*. We'll be in Europe in November, and North America and Australia in the spring.
www.billyidol.net

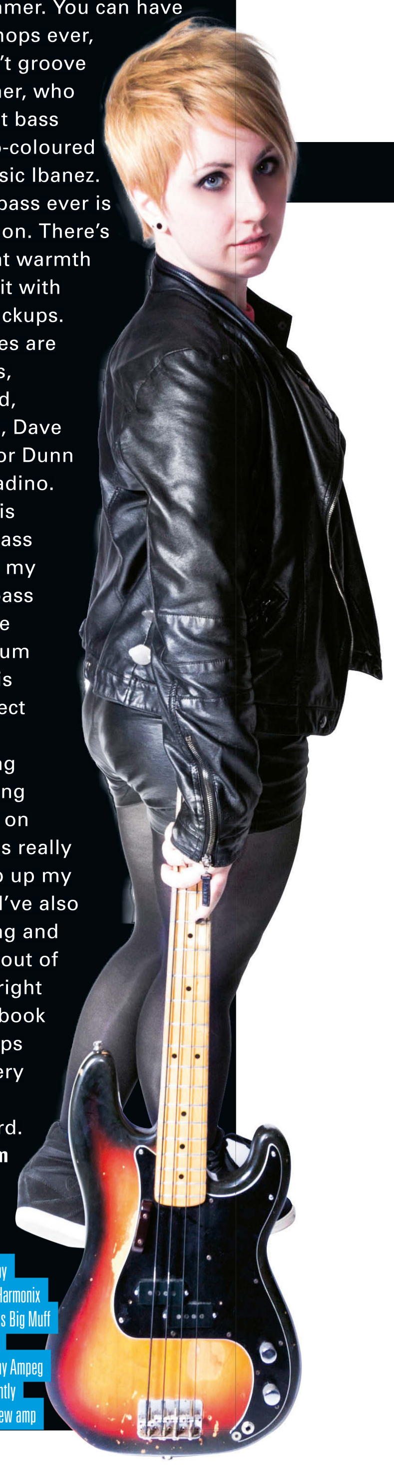
JOE GOLDMAN, CODE ORANGE

I was taught and brought up playing a four-string bass. While there are definitely advantages to having extra strings, I've never run into a situation where I've needed one. I think slapping sounds really cool on funk and pop records, but I generally hate it when hardcore or metal players use that technique. It just sounds corny to me in the wrong context. The secret of playing bass well is locking in on the feel and the groove of the rest of the band. Bass players are there to be in sync with every other musician playing with them. If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose the Superfly soundtrack by Curtis Mayfield. I would never use it in my own band, but I still love it. Code Orange recently released our second album, *I Am King*. We're hoping to get to visit the UK soon.
www.codeorangekids.com

GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision
EFFECTS OCD distortion
AMPS Orange Terror head

LINDSAY WADE, DJ UMC

I don't play five-string bass much any more since I found my P-Bass. I still occasionally pick up the five-string when I'm missing some low growling Cs and Ds. Slapping has never really been my thing and it doesn't fit stylistically with most of the music I'm playing currently. Sometimes it's good to throw in a slap or pop just to keep things interesting. The secret of playing bass well is to sit in the pocket with the drummer. You can have the craziest chops ever, but if you can't groove with a drummer, who cares? My first bass was an indigo-coloured four-string basic Ibanez. My favourite bass ever is my '73 Precision. There's such a brilliant warmth and clarity to it with the original pickups. My bass heroes are Bootsy Collins, Stefan Lessard, Larry Graham, Dave Holland, Trevor Dunn and Pino Palladino. Paul Jackson is the greatest bass player ever in my opinion. His bass tone on Herbie Hancock's album Headhunters is the most perfect bass sound ever. Analysing and transcribing his bass-lines on that album has really made me step up my own playing. I've also been practising and sight reading out of a classical upright bass method book to get my chops moving in every direction on the fingerboard.
www.djumc.com



GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision
EFFECTS Warden Compressor by Earthquaker, Electro-Harmonix Electric Mistress, Bass Big Muff Pi, Bass Micro Synth
AMPS I recently blew out my Ampeg BA 115, so I'm currently in the market for a new amp

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JOE HUBBARD

I'm an improvising bassist. Improvisation is a concept of creating musical lines based on understanding the components of music: melody, harmony, rhythm, counterpoint and form. When learning you need to break down all of these components in isolation in order for your ideas to flow in performance. I play a five-string bass because this is the range that I hear from the B string to the G string. This range provides me with the functionality that I need as a bass player. I slap, but not as much any more. It is basically a sonic nuance in my arsenal. I feel these days too many players are mindlessly slapping with little degree of musicality. I always loved the way Marcus Miller approached slapping, but a lot of Marcus and Victor Wooten clones lack the musical foundation that these guys have. The secret of playing bass? Well, there are no secrets! Learning to be a great bass player is achievable by getting a great teacher who understands music, practising hard and putting in the work. Developing expert status can easily be done within five to six years of proper development. My first bass was a 1966 Fender Precision that was stolen from me at gunpoint when I was studying at Berklee in 1980. My favourite bass to date is what I'm playing now, which is a Roscoe Century Custom five-string. In my opinion Roscoe are the only company that really understands how to get their B strings sounding right in all playing positions. It is simply an amazing instrument.

www.joehubbardbassvideos.com

BASSES Musicman Stingray, Gibson Les Paul, Fender Jazz
EFFECTS Boss digital delay/reverb, Ibanez Tube Screamer, EHX Tube EQ
AMPS GK 500MB, Hartke 3500
GEAR

GEAR
BASSES ESP GC-4, ESP Vintage 4
EFFECTS Sansamp RBI
AMPS Fender TB 1200

GABE CRISP, WHITECHAPEL

I don't play a five- or six-string bass any more, because I don't need it and I love the feel of a four-string in my hands. As long as you have the right gauge strings, a four-string bass can get just as heavy as any guitar. I love the sound and speed of playing with a pick. The secret of playing bass well is to practise a lot, of course. When playing metal I think your right hand is definitely just as important as your left. Pick hard and tight. My favourite bass ever to date has to be my ESP signature GC-4. I mean duh, it's got my name on it! My bass heroes are Mike Dirnt of Green Day, Mark Hoppus of Blink 182 and Dan Andriano of Alkaline Trio. The greatest bass player that ever lived? Hard choice for me, but with my history I have to say Mike Dirnt because if it wasn't for his playing on *Dookie*, I would never have picked up a bass guitar. Don't be afraid to hang in the pocket and groove, because if it wasn't for you holding down the low end, no one would be shaking their ass, I promise.

www.whitechapelband.com

GEAR
BASSES Fender Jazz, Musicman Stingray
EFFECTS None
AMPS Markbass TA503 head plus Traveler 102P and Standard 151HR cabs

GEAR
BASSES Fret King Black Label Perception 4, Vintage VM4 Custom P-Bass, Eastwood Stormbird, Gibson SG Bass Shortscale, Cort GB95
EFFECTS Bass Big Muff, Crowther Prunes And Custard, home-made optical compressor
AMPS Genz Benz Shuttle 6.0, Phil Jones Bass cabinets

JON SYKES, THE PINEAPPLE THIEF

I would describe my bass style as solid. I think that you just have to hold it down and enjoy doing that. If you can run about, sing, make good contact with the audience at the same time, then so much the better. I used to do some slapping stuff and it's great fun and a great skill to have if you are going to play it in context. I have only admiration for those who really master it. It's obviously so percussive and funky and it can get the bass

> "I HAVE ONLY ADMIRATION FOR THOSE WHO REALLY MASTER SLAPPING"

into the spotlight which is great. However, for our songs it is rarely going to be the right choice. I once had a 1983 Kramer Stagemaster in white. It looked fantastic, but it was really heavy, rather unbalanced and the sound was never spot on. I can't help wondering who has got my stolen Status Series 1, which I really miss because it was the first really decent instrument I owned. It was taken in a burglary in 2000. Ash body, woven graphite neck headed, stack active circuit, S/N 1693 – just in case anybody has seen it... My bass heroes are James Jamerson, Jaco, Duff MaKagan, Bernard Edwards, Andrew Levy, Paul McCartney, John Taylor and Rocco Prestia. These are the people who I sometimes pretend to be when nobody is looking and whose lines I've spent a lot of time playing and trying to copy. The Pineapple Thief's 10th album *Magnolia* is out now.
www.pineapplethief.com

COLIN MCKENZIE, INTRANSIT

My playing style developed from a mix of influences, mainly jazz, R&B and rock. When I first started playing bass I was into rock, particularly Hendrix, but later I also got heavily into R&B, funk and jazz. I've tried to develop as much of my own sound and style as possible and been lucky enough to get gigs where I can play that way. It's a different thing working as a studio musician where more often than not I'll adapt my style to suit the situation. Then you need flexibility with style and tone, because you're looking to achieve what the producer and the artist have in mind. I mainly play fretless and fretted four-string basses but I also play five-string if it's needed. I mostly play fingerstyle and don't slap as much as I used to. In the past I did more of it and did a lot of great sessions playing in that style. I was really into players like Larry Graham and Louis Johnson, and speaking of Larry, I remember working with the producer Keith Diamond, replacing some bass that'd already been recorded on an album project he was doing. He waited until the sessions were over to tell me that in fact we'd just replaced Larry Graham, who apparently knew the artist and had turned up at a previous session in LA where he'd ended up doing some impromptu jamming. Look out for our album Barlovento on Bandcamp. **www.colinmckenzie.co.uk**

GEAR
BASSES Hofner, Rickenbacker 4000, Fender Precision
EFFECTS None
AMPS Markbass

DUNCAN REID, DUNCAN REID & THE BIG HEADS

I think there's a fine line between overplaying and being boring. I don't play super fast but it's necessary to add some interest underneath all of the higher register instruments. The job of the bass is to anchor the song at the bottom end of the register. You don't need loads of strings that take you higher and higher. The bass player is not a guitarist. I'm also a front man on stage leaping about. I want to be carrying the thinnest plank of wood I can. I do not slap, because it makes a stupid noise. Who wants that on a record? Plus, people tend to pull a stupid face when they do it. The secret of playing bass well is to complement the rest of the song, pick your notes well and find a rhythm, which covers the bass drum – don't leave the latter flapping around on its own. My favourite bass to date is the Rickenbacker 4000 I use on stage. It's a thing of beauty that everyone who sees wants. I bought it second hand and it's from the '60s. It has that growling Rickenbacker sound but only slightly. I've shaved the top edge to soften it and stop it making my forearm swell up on stage which has knocked about £1,000 off its value. We've been together for over 30 years now and it's like a dance partner who knows your every move. Most bass guitars are too heavy on your shoulders. The low notes sound best at the bottom of the neck and the high notes best up the top. Why don't they make all bass guitars with three strings then? Our album *The Difficult Second Album* is out now and we play the UK and Germany soon.
www.littlebighead.co.uk

THE MU PAGE

THE MU ADVISE BASSISTS ON ALTERNATE INCOME STREAMS... KER-CHING!

In the current market, artists have to make up for shortfalls in CD and download sales with income sourced elsewhere. But all is not lost. Even highly successful artists do not make their living 100% from performing music. With a little imagination and savvy it is possible to come up with ingenious ways to boost your income using your musical talents.

RESEARCH

It's a good idea to spend a little time brainstorming ideas. What are you good at? What skills do you have? What's your USP?

Matt Wanstall, MU regional officer for the north of England, suggests considering the obvious first: trying different types of performance or unusual combinations of skills. "Even as a performer, there may be a lot of different things a musician can do. Someone may have their own artistic project, but they may be able to play in a covers or functions band as well."

"Some musicians might write or arrange for other people," Wanstall continues. "They may have a studio, so as well as recording their own material, they could record other bands or do sessions online remotely for other artists, for instance. DJing is another option – parties and weddings can be lucrative – as is playing in elderly people's homes."

Research can help locate gaps in music-related enterprises in your area. For example, if you are a singer who is good with children, you may want to try running a music group for toddlers or primary school children. You could even run a course for adults, or a seniors' choir that takes place during the day for retired people. Music therapy is another option.

> "RESEARCH CAN HELP LOCATE GAPS IN MUSIC-RELATED ENTERPRISES IN YOUR AREA"

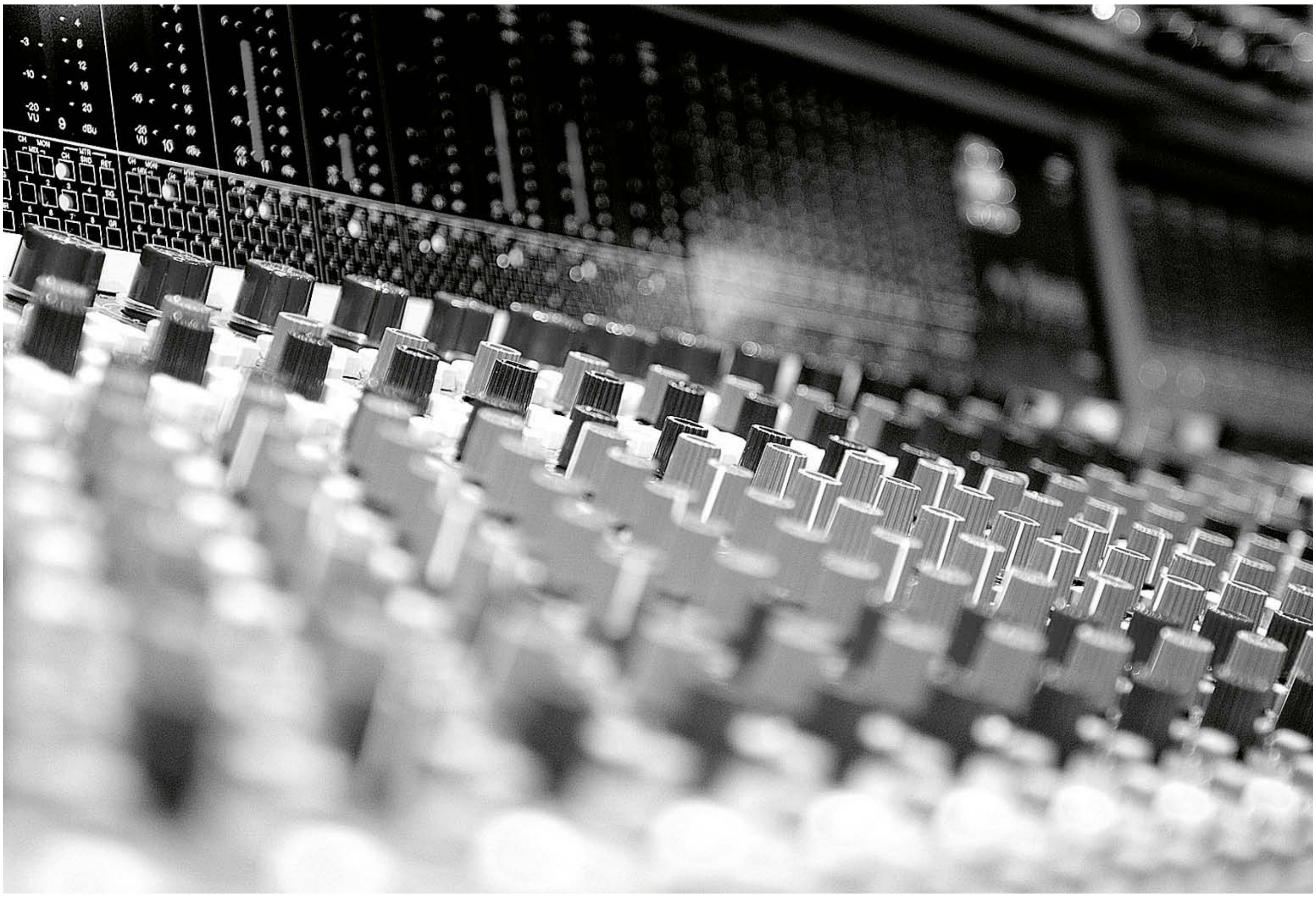
TEACHING

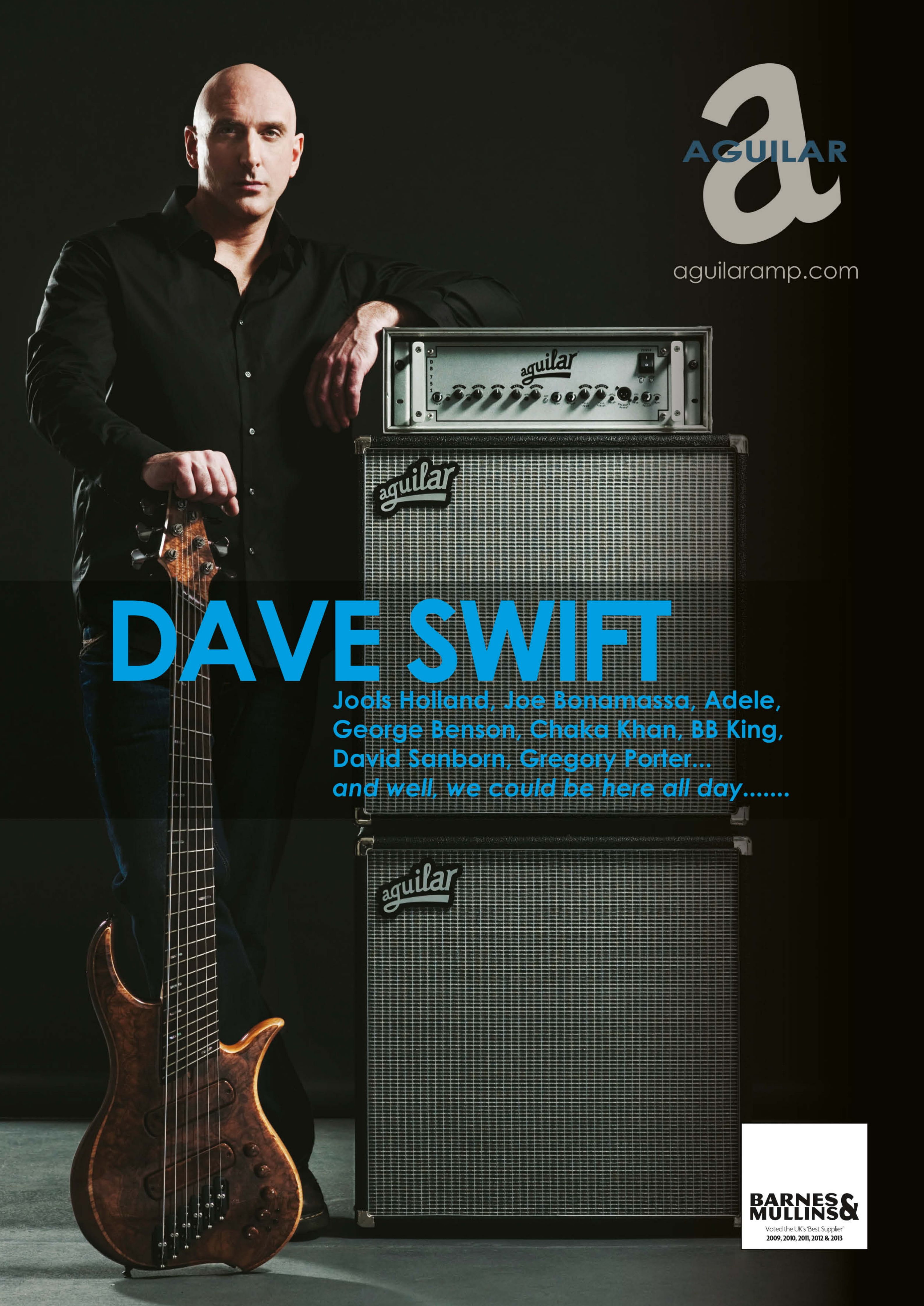
Professional musicians at all career levels enjoy sharing their knowledge with others, children or adults. It can be rewarding and enlightening for the tutor as well as the student.

"Teaching is something that two-thirds of our members have in their portfolio – whether they've arrived at it via a formal route, or they give private lessons," comments Bindu Paul, MU education and equalities official. "We provide bespoke advice on starting out and professional development at any stage in your teaching career."

If you are thinking of teaching, check out musicteachers.co.uk/artofteaching for best practice guides and ideas for the classroom.

MU members get access to a range of career development advice. If you're considering a change, contact your regional office and book a one-to-one with your MU official for bespoke advice. For general advice and more information about how to join the Union, please visit theMU.org.

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English Castle MAGIC

TROY SANDERS PLAYS BASS. HE ALSO SINGS. NOT ONLY THAT, HE IS THE FRONTMAN OF MASTODON, A BAND THAT IS QUITE POSSIBLY THE MOST EXCITING MUSICAL FORCE OF THE HEAVY ROCK PERSUASION OPERATING TODAY. JOEL MCIVER ASKS THE QUESTIONS; TINA KORHONEN TAKES THE SHOTS

It's appropriate for a rock band as ambitious and grandiose in scope as Atlanta four-piece Mastodon that when we interview their bassist Troy Sanders, it is at Knebworth House, the Hertfordshire country pile that was once the domain of Led Zeppelin and other rock behemoths. Mastodon are here to play the Sonisphere Festival on the same stage as Metallica, one of a handful of metal bands who are bigger and heavier than they are, but Troy and his team aren't nervous: they know that their incendiary live performances, plus the mind-blowing songs on albums such as their new one, *Once More 'Round The Sun*, are pretty much unbeatable.

Any gig where you're playing in front of 100,000 fans is not an experience to be taken for granted. "Being on that main stage was overwhelming," chuckles Sanders after the set. "When you're seeing faces as far as you can possibly see, it creates an environment that seems unreal. It almost feels like you're not there. It's so much larger than anything we've done before, or at least since the last time we played the main stage at Knebworth, it's really bizarre. It's almost like a dream: on that stage, I felt really foggy and cloudy. It's really hard to explain, but I really enjoyed it, and that was the end of our UK and Europe festival run for the summer. It was nice to go out with a huge bang."

Asked how being lost in a 'fog of rock' on stage affects his bass playing, Sanders muses: "I lose perspective on what's really happening. I know my bandmates are playing super-well, but it's just so massive that it takes me the entire set length to know what's really happening. That should make me concentrate harder, but I kind of levitate into this mental dreamscape and I probably make more mistakes than ever. But I don't know if I did, and I'm not going to watch any footage of the set. I just have a good memory of it. I hope it was okay, and I'll just leave it at that..."

Sanders can rest easy. Mastodon levelled the crowd at Knebworth, just as they do every time they play. This is partly due to their abilities as musicians, their utterly unclassifiable songwriting and the sheer power of their production, but also because they've been doing this rock'n'roll thing for a long time now and know what they're doing. Formed in Atlanta, Georgia in 2000, the foursome – Sanders plus guitarists Brent Hinds and Bill Kelliher and drummer Brann Dailor – have recorded six albums to date, all packed with densely-layered sound that somehow manages to be intimidating and catchy at the same time. See them live if you can.

Asked about the tools of his trade, Sanders reveals his new signature Fender Jaguar bass, a slinky-looking silverburst instrument that begs you to pick it up for a play. Much as we love Precision and Jazz basses round these parts, it's refreshing to see a bassist using a

different Fender for a change – especially as a signature model. While plenty of bass players love a bit of Jaguar, from Colin Greenwood of Radiohead to Stefan Olsdal of Placebo, you'll be hard put to find someone with their actual name on the headstock.

"About five years ago I was in Kansas City, Missouri," recalls Sanders, "and my younger brother Darren found a Jaguar bass in a store and bought it for me. I'd been playing loads of different basses, including a lot of P and J basses, so he thought it would be nice for me to try a Jaguar. I played it and fell in love with it. A year or two later the kind folks at Fender approached me, and they told me that they were interested in doing a signature bass, which was beyond flattering – because it's Fender!"

Sanders didn't take long to make up his mind, he tells us. "I was blown away, and told them that of course I would be beyond humbled and honoured to do anything with them, so we started going back and forth with signature Jazz and Precision basses. I told them I was really digging my Jaguar a lot, and they were interested in doing one of those, as there's only a small number of Jaguar signature basses. I told them that sounded perfect."

Anyone who has played these jungle beasts will know that the controls can be a little tricky, with several switching options available to the tone-hungry bassist. Sanders quickly got rid of all that, he explains. "I'm part-Neanderthal, and I like things simple! I have that caveman mentality. The Jaguar bass normally has two plate switches and two volume knobs, plus two or three EQ controls, so we made it more to my liking and simplified it quite a bit. Then we did the silverburst colour scheme. My guitar players Brett and Bill have always played silverburst guitars on stage together, and I was the only one without that finish. The Fender guys thought it was a great colour scheme, though. You know, I'm still in awe that they even approached me."

Over the years Sanders has played several cool basses: a quick look back at his last appearance in these hallowed pages back in 2009 reveals that he was playing Yamahas, Fender P and Js and a Godlyke Deity at the time. Things have moved on apace since then, he tells us: "I bring three different basses with me on tour, because we have three different tunings throughout the set and I like to have one guitar for each one. I start with my Jaguar, and then I play a custom Warwick Streamer that I use when we tune down to A, because it handles the low tunings better than the other basses. It's a phenomenal instrument – a Mastodon custom bass – and it looks and sounds beautiful. Warwick simplified the Streamer for me by setting the bass and treble to halfway and just leaving a single volume knob. I really

Obviously Sanders strips down his signal chain a bit when he hits the road – a wise decision, given stage constraints, airfreight costs and the delicate touch of baggage handlers. "I travel with a simple pedalboard," he explains. "Live, I have a standard TC Electronic tuner, and a TC Electronic Corona chorus, which I use about 25 percent of the time or less on the softer, spacier bass parts. Then I have a Dunlop wah for two or three parts, and finally I have a distortion."

Bass distortion is a subject close to his heart, says Sanders. "I own a lot of different distortion pedals, and I bring out a different one for every tour. My go-to is called a Tall Font Russian, made by a small company called Wren & Cuff in California. It's based on the old Big Muff: in fact, I once A/B'ed them together and I couldn't tell the difference. They're both beautiful, but the Tall Font Russian is a smaller pedal. I also have a Rottweiler distortion, made by TC Electronic, and then my classic Russian-made Big Muff. Those three are my go-to distortions, and they're all phenomenal."

"I know it's kind of ridiculous that I still go to stores and want to buy pedals just to play them and see what they sound like," he sighs. "On the other hand, it's cool that the fire is still burning in me, that I still want to want to jam with my bandmates and that I look forward to writing new songs and going on tour. I hope that ambition and that fire continues to burn. I still consider Mastodon my hobby and my passion, and at the same

"I'M PART-NEANDERTHAL, AND I LIKE THINGS SIMPLE!"

enjoy the simplicity of that. The fretboard has the first four icons from the covers of our first albums on it. It's such a warm-sounding bass – I love it.

"The third bass that I take on tour is a Zon, that I got last year. I'd always liked them but I'd never played them, and Liam Wilson from the Dillinger Escape Plan was always raving about his Zon to me. When I went through San Francisco in 2013, the Zon people came out and gave me one to try. They were kind enough to say 'Play it, and if you like it, keep on playing it, and if you don't like it, just return it', and a year later I was still playing it. If I love my gear, I'm gonna play it, and that's why I own it."

It's interesting to note that Sanders, a man who likes to keep things simple, is an effects freak, with more wacky sounds under his right boot than most of us acquire in a lifetime. "I have 40 pedals in my practice room," he laughs. "The reason I own so many is because I look at them like toys: I like to get a couple out and play with them every time we practise. They're fun. I take the majority with me when we go to record an album, in case the producer thinks they might be useful."

time it's a dream job. My attitude towards it is still to have fun, so I have loads of bass guitars, loads of pedals – and I've got way too many amps and cabinets."

On which note... "I always take three heads on tour," Sanders explains, contradicting his earlier 'simple is good' claim even more. "Overseas I've got two Mesa Boogie Road Ready cabs for Europe and the UK. The three amps are an Orange AD200B, an Ampeg SVT VR and a TC Electronic Blacksmith, a gorgeous solid-state amp that's got the warmest sound I ever heard. Between those three amps, I'm always running two of them randomly: one runs a cabinet clean, and another runs a second cab dirty, and there's always a third amp as a backup. Which two of the three I run changes every night. When we're playing in America, I run Fender Bassman 8x10 cabinets and more Mesa Boogie Road Ready cabinets, they're solid as hell. The three amps are another Ampeg SVT VR, a Mesa Boogie Big Block and the Orange AD 200B again. Same deal: two of the three amps are always in the mix."

Hang on, we cry! Sanders was going on about how he likes things simple, and now he's just told us that he goes out with three basses, four pedals and a combination of three different heads and cabs. What gives, headbanger?

Sanders laughs. "Well, I've been beyond spoiled for many years to have my brother Darren working for me. He knows about looms, and stringing pedals together properly, and changing fuses and voltages and biases and other stuff. His knowledge far surpasses mine and he has helped to build me a proper, intricate rig over the years. My touring rig has gone way beyond what my small monkey brain can comprehend, but he sets it up, tears it down, packs it up and loads it in. In fact, a while ago he couldn't make it to one of our shows in Canada, and I said to him, 'Dude, I don't know how to set the rig up!' so he had to diagram it out so I could play the show. But in the practice space here in Atlanta, I go down there and set it up. It's just my pedalboard and a little amp. I can just about go to practice on my own."

"AS THE BASS PLAYER IN A HEAVILY GUITAR-DRIVEN BAND, I DON'T NEED TO SHINE"

So, the million-dollar question: how does Sanders hold down the majority of Mastodon's vocals while laying down the bass parts, which are often complex even when they're in unison with the guitars? Restraint is the key, he tells us: "As the bass player in a heavily guitar-driven band, I don't need to shine: I don't need to be the spotlight any more than I already am. I love being the warmth around our drummer, Brann, who is a phenomenal drummer. I love wrapping my bass around his drum. Then there are the moments when we have the statelier, more chord-ringing parts, so that's when I have the opportunity to move around a little bit, and put in whatever feeling I can add. I enjoy that a lot: it's my time to move around a bit. I try to get some feel when the time is right, but because we have two guitar wizards and a mountain range of a drummer back there, my role doesn't usually need to be any more than just rocking out."

He adds: "I essentially live two lives in Mastodon. Lyrics and vocal patterns come last because we record all the music first. At that point, I try to be as tasteful and consistent as possible on the bass. Then I go into vocal mode: we have a vocal tag-team between Brann, Brent and myself; we bounce ideas off each other to see what the strongest one is. Then it takes loads and loads of practice and repetition to get it all right, because playing bass and singing is a lot like rubbing your belly and patting your head. There are two different rhythms going on at once!"

Sanders concludes: "In January we will be 15 years old as a band, and I'm so glad that we can still do it and that it's the same four guys. Relationships are difficult to sustain, whether it's a friend or a girlfriend or whoever, so I'm proud of the fact that we've stayed close for so long. It never ceases to amaze me that we're still able to do what we do, and I'm blown away by my bandmates' ability to craft the songs. I'm thrilled to start touring this record heavily, because I love it, just as I've loved all our albums.

"I see no reason why we can't continue forever, because we have so many musical loves between us. Our sound has changed drastically over the last 15 years and I'm sure we can continue to evolve. We could easily record a country album, for example. We love classic surf-rock and we love bluegrass. We love everything from 1970s rock'n'roll, so I believe that the four of us could continue forever. If it's not broke, don't fix it!"

***Once More 'Round The Sun* is out now on Warners. Mastodon is playing UK dates between 19 November and 2 December. Info: www.mastodonrocks.com. Thanks to Henry Lytton-Cobbold for permission to shoot at Knebworth House.**

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PURPLE REIGN

DANISH BASSIST IDA NIELSEN HAS A STORY TO TELL LIKE NO OTHER. FOR STARTERS, HER BAND 3RD EYE GIRL IS PRINCE'S BACKING GROUP. JOEL MCIVER FINDS OUT HOW THE GREAT MINNEAPOLITE AND THE FUNKY DANE GOT TOGETHER

Ask Ida Nielsen how she got started on the bass guitar and it's the usual story – up to a point, anyway... "I grew up in the countryside in Denmark," she recalls, "and my school had an electric bass and a drum kit. Everybody in the school wanted to try them. I played piano and sang in a choir, and one of the girls in the choir had a band. Her bass player quit, so she asked me if I wanted to try the bass. I gave it a go, and we started to play covers. Then I saw another band playing original material, and their bass player was playing funk. I saw him and said, 'Wow! What is he doing?' and went home and tried to play that way myself. When I found it, I loved it, and continued to play that style of bass."

She continues, "I played with a bunch of bands in Denmark and also with a Belgian-African band called Zap Mama. I've done a bit of international touring as well. In 2008 I released my first solo album, *Marmelade*, because I wanted to do my own music: a funk album with a lot of bass on it. I didn't care if no one wanted to listen to it; I wanted to finally play the way I wanted. That brought me a lot of attention, so I started doing a lot of clinics and I started working with TC Electronic. I recorded a lot of videos for them, which went on YouTube around 2010 – and that was how Prince found me."

Prince, eh? Only the most enigmatic musician in the world. Fans of the great man, and there are millions, will not be surprised to hear that on receiving a phone call from Minneapolis, Ida thought that someone was 'having a larf'.

"I got a call from his manager, but I couldn't really hear what she was saying," she recalls. "I did hear her say the name Prince, but I thought it was a joke. She invited me over to [Prince's near-mythical studio] Paisley Park for a jam and I said 'Sure!' and she told me she'd call me back. But I didn't hear anything for two weeks, so I thought that was it until I finally got the call and went to Minneapolis – and three months later I was on tour with Prince."

Back up a moment. When you show up at Paisley Park, clutching a bass guitar, you presumably do some homework beforehand. Did Prince ask Ida to learn some tunes before coming over? "I got an email the night before I left for Minneapolis, with two songs that I had to learn," she chuckles. "They were 'Dreamer' and 'Funk', which I'm not sure are album tracks. I knew other songs too, of course, because I've always loved Prince: I listened to a bunch of stuff to prepare myself."

What was it actually like, standing right there with Prince, jamming the funk? "He was super sweet when I first got there, because I was nervous," Ida remembers. "He asked me which kind of basses I had and stuff like that, to help me relax and get into nerd mode. After a few minutes it was cool and we started jamming. Prince asked me if I could go on tour with him, so I learned a whole bunch of songs. There was a lot of stuff to remember, because he likes to change things up and not always stick to what's on the set list, so I had a lot of different songs to learn in a short time, that was the hardest part of it. It wasn't like a normal gig where you have 30 songs: I had to learn 300 songs. That took a lot of time."

"HE WAS SUPER SWEET WHEN I FIRST GOT THERE, BECAUSE I WAS NERVOUS"

We must have our hearing checked: we thought she said '300 songs'... "It's actually more than 300 now, because I've been learning more songs as we go along!"

Now that's commitment. Four years into Ida's stint with Prince, he has released two albums at the same time – *Art Official Age* and *Plectrumelectrum*. What gear is Ida using to deliver the bass notes? "I've been playing a Sandberg Masterpiece for the last four years," she says. "I also have a Yamaha five-string, but I haven't played it much lately because Prince's music has been all four-string. I only play one bass with Prince because there's no time to change between songs. Right now, for the shows following the upcoming album, I think I'm going to be playing an old Danelectro Longhorn bass, because it sounds really old and it fits the music well – and it looks cool too. I basically play standard tuning, but occasionally I'll drop the E string to D."

And the rest of the chain? "I use a Crybaby bass wah, an envelope filter, two octavers that each play an octave up and an octave down, TC's Polytune and a bass booster. Right now I'm playing stereo through TC Electronic gear, which I've been using since 2009. I'm playing their biggest amp, the Blacksmith: I have two of those on stage with a bunch of cabinets."

The music on Prince's two new albums, and indeed in his previous releases going as far back as the late 1970s, is heavily funk-indebted – nirvana for a bass player, we reckon. Ida agrees: "I love playing slap bass, but it depends on who you're playing with and what kind of music it is: you have to adapt your playing. I have so many influences that I don't want to mention everybody in case I leave someone out, but there's Marcus Miller, Larry Graham, Rocco Prestia, Meshell Ndegeocello, Bootsy Collins, Steve Bailey, Victor Wooten, James Jamerson – all these guys. There are so many great players and I admire each of them for their different thing. And there's Prince too!"

So how long into the future is Ida committed to being in Prince's band? "It's open-ended," she tells us. "We're all living in the now and we're all fully committed to whatever it takes with the album coming out."

Finally, where does Ida go from here? Once you've been Prince's bass player, there's no higher place to go, we reckon, unless the Rolling Stones or possibly U2 come calling. Ida laughs this off: "Well, Prince was number one on the list of people I wanted to play with, so it's a good question! It's amazing being with him. Everybody knows that he's an incredible musician and singer, and that he can play all instruments, but the thing for me is his love for the music. He's a master arranger and he can feel that he always gives 100 percent. He gives his whole heart and soul to the music, and that makes you want to do that too. No concert is the same, because he always switches up the set list, and playing with him gives me an amazing feeling that I've never felt with any other musician. With him, you're in the moment 100 per cent – and it's such a good feeling." ■

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BLINGRAY!

UNCLE FUNK BASSIST DAVE CLARKE DESCRIBES THE PROCESS THAT TRANSFORMED HIS STINGRAY INTO A DISCO-BALL-BEDECKED DISCO ARTEFACT

In the early-to-mid-90s, Uncle Funk, my friends' band from Bishops Stortford, performed testosterone-fuelled original compositions with titles such as 'All The Best Girls Are Seventeen', 'Top Shelf Paranoia' and 'Poo Kiss Banana' in outfits that made Liberace look conservative.

Uncle Funk gigs, along the M11 corridor between Harlow and Cambridge, were always sold-out affairs, with the band's sizable army of loyal fans convinced of their musical heroes' destiny as stars. To the band's delight, this opinion was not shared by a guest music critic for the *Harlow Star*, who that week dismissed their performance at The Square, the town's premier music venue, as "sexist, degrading and crap". Critical acclaim aside, instead of conquering the world Uncle Funk then split up, only to reform at the end of the decade, reinventing themselves as one of UK's first bona fide disco tribute acts.

I was offered the bass gig for Uncle Funk in 2002, with lead singer Simonella Funkenfurta informing me that their previous bassist had to leave due to his commitments as a magician at children's parties. No, seriously! I accepted Simonella's invitation and dug out my 1989 trans-red Musicman Stingray to learn a three-hour set of disco classics. In the 10 years that followed I would play hundreds of gigs with that battered MusicMan, while wearing an Afro wig big enough to have its own postcode.

In 2012, I acquired an immaculate black Musicman Stingray Classic on eBay after successfully bidding just £900. I couldn't believe my luck. It's an incredible bass to play, and I pretty much retired my trusty old '80s Stingray there and then. However, everything changed in October 2013, when Uncle Funk's guitarist Flash Jackson arrived for a soundcheck armed with a new Fender Stratocaster that he'd had customised to boast a brilliant mirror-ball finish on the body and dazzling bright blue LEDs in the neck, perfectly complementing Uncle Funk's fetish for being 'More '70s Than The '70s'. Resistance was futile. I had no choice. One of my basses was about to receive a decadent makeover.

I instinctively knew I wasn't going to touch my new Stingray Classic – it was already perfect. This meant my old '89 Stingray was set for a comeback of *Rocky III* proportions. Before its unlikely return to the live arena, though, some major surgery would be required.

Sims Custom Shop in Ashford, Kent, had done a great job on Nick's Strat, so it made sense for them to work on my top-secret project. I had a few ideas to achieve maximum mirror-ball exposure, such as losing the crescent-shaped chrome volume and EQ plate, and having a clear perspex scratchplate made. I used swamp ash for a noticeably lighter body, while the top's surface would have no contoured edges to better accommodate the mirror-ball tiles. The body's back and sides would be spray-painted in a silver glitter flake finish. I didn't bother with the LEDs, leaving that stuff for the aptly named Flash Jackson to show off.

It was six weeks before I collected the finished article from Sims. During that time I read Simon McVeigh's *Bass From The Grave* feature from *BGM* 96 and noticed the pick-up covers, which he'd had custom-made for a Musicman Sabre restoration. Simon had replaced the standard black covers with a pair made from polished aluminium, expertly made by Ireland's Matty Dread. Simon kindly put me in touch with Matty, who in turn agreed to make what I envisioned as the icing on my cake. Matty shipped the cover to Sims to finish the project, but not before laser-etching 'DC1' into it, which I couldn't resist.

Come the big day, I arrived at Sims workshop and peered through a window to see hanging on the wall a truly stunning bass guitar. I couldn't quite believe it; my 25-year-old Musicman Stingray had become an ice-cool slap of disco-inspired bling – a Blingray, if you will. This was undoubtedly my mission accomplished, and my bass's comeback was complete, furnished with a set of DR Neon's white luminescent strings for good measure.

It may have cost me a small fortune but it was worth every single penny. I am now the proud owner of a unique instrument, which, as far as I'm concerned, is easily the coolest looking Musicman Stingray on the planet.

Info: www.facebook.com/unclefunkuk

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¡Vamos!

JOE SHOOMAN MEETS PAZ LENCHANTIN, VETERAN OF MANY AMAZING ROCK BANDS AND CURRENTLY HOLDING DOWN THE BASS WITH THE SEMINAL PIXIES

Let's get it out there from the start: Paz Lenchantin isn't interested in replacing a legend, but she sure as hell is enjoying the Pixies ride.

The Argentinean-American bassist and multi-instrumentalist has been touring with the legendary indie noisemakers since December 2013. Relaxed and in friendly mood before a gig in Istanbul, Paz tells *Bass Guitar Magazine* how it all came about.

"I knew Joey Santiago, the Pixies' guitar player, from way back, almost 20 years ago," begins the bassist. "Before [one of Paz's first bands] A Perfect Circle, he called me when he was doing a side project with his wife called the Martinis; he was looking for a bass player.

"We played a few shows in California a long time ago. Then I started doing the rounds with A Perfect Circle and would see Joey around with Pixies at festivals and such, so we'd always say hi and talk about music."

Fast forward 20 years or so, and original bassist Kim Deal's departure from the Pixies was followed by an ill-starred stint in the band by te mporary touring bassist Kim Shattuck. When the latter parted company with that band, Santiago had one person on his mind.

"Joey called [drummer] Josh Freese from A Perfect Circle to try and get my number. Josh was definitely a big part in making all of this happen. Joey gave me a call basically saying the Pixies needed a bass player. They gave me a bunch of songs to learn, I showed up and I played them," laughs Paz, in the understatement of the century.

That coveted bass slot requires an in depth knowledge of Pixies songs, confirms the musician. "We don't really have a set list so I really never know what we're going to do. It's like, 'Oh wow, we're playing that song now, I love that'. You're kept on your toes, without a doubt. I really enjoy it when it's free like that. There are not many bands that play so spontaneously. It's refreshing."

Paz has appeared on oodles of other people's projects, playing everything from violin to Indian flute, strings and vocals. Names such as Melissa Auf Der Maur, Queens Of The Stone Age, Silver Jews, Entrance and Zwan pop out alongside her two solo albums. "There's a breath of fresh air about it when you have fewer responsibilities and are part of doing what's best for the song that is already written. It is a great challenge," she says of guest appearances.

"With Pixies it is a great journey – especially those classics, which have been heard over and over by the fans – to come in and use the spirit of it. I think there is a spirit to music, it's not so much about the notes as it is about the spirit of what you're doing. I am not a copycat, but I do understand the spirit of where something comes from and how it can reach someone."

Paz tells us she first got involved with a love for bass playing at the age of 12. "My first bass guitar was an acoustic six-string guitar that was just around the house. It was actually my grandfather's on my mother's side," she reveals. "I just picked it up and started playing it like a bass, listening to songs I liked at the time. I never met my grandfather; the acoustic was from Argentina, really thin, quite an old guitar that still had some original strings on there. Nothing special, but it was an authentic guitar which looked quite hand-made, but not by my family. I just fancied it; I don't know why. It's a strange world and I wish I could know exactly what it was that motivated me to do it but I just know I did it and I kept doing it."

She developed her skills by listening to the radio and seeking out acoustic performances of songs to play along with. "Any time I would hear a radio show with a singer-songwriter,

Pic by Leslie Butler: flickr.com/photos/lesliebutler/

Pic by Leo Bert, Klubb Lottarox Florence

"WITH PIXIES IT IS A GREAT JOURNEY – ESPECIALLY THOSE CLASSICS, WHICH HAVE BEEN HEARD OVER AND OVER BY THE FANS – TO COME IN AND USE THE SPIRIT OF IT"

without a bass, I'd get my bass out and jam with that person through the radio. I really loved doing that, because you are not following anything," she continues.

"You just start following a song you are familiar with that doesn't have a bass, because they are playing an acoustic version of it. Then you are playing along to one of your favourite artists doing a rendition of a song without a bass, live on the radio."

It's all about creating your own lines as well as being involved in what she terms 'the evolution of music'.

"I do love preserving music but I also want to evolve it, take it somewhere. That's what being in a time is, doing something today not just repeating something that was done yesterday. You can learn from the past but there's a point where you have to take off the training wheels and just go on your own. That's when you learn a lot about yourself," she confirms.

In those early days, Paz was a fan of Simon Gallup of the Cure, New Order's Peter Hook, and more. "I was also listening to Can and definitely more in the gothic area in my early teens. There was obviously also the Beatles, Jimi Hendrix – Billy Cox was awesome. I just kept playing along to people until I found my own style. I didn't know what I was doing; I wasn't using a pick until way later when I started with A Perfect Circle. I was fingerpicking until my early twenties.

"Early on when I was playing along with Peter Hook songs, he would use a pick while I would not. I would just be interested in the melodies they were creating. But later I realised that there was also a sound [profile] to this melody that definitely sounded better if you just pick it. At the beginning I was a purist for fingerpicking for some reason, as it just seemed like using your fingers had a much more natural feel. Later on, I revisited some of the songs I was playing when I was 12, 13 from bands like Joy Division and the Cure, and got myself using the pick, and within a week or two I was quite the pick player. I'm talking about non-stop playing; I was a little bit obsessed with the bass and I never stopped playing."

Alongside perennial favourites John Paul Jones, Rick Danko, Billy Cox et al, Paz namechecks Tim Koh of Ariel Pink's Haunted Graffiti as a contemporary with cracking chops plus the "super, super awesome" Eyadou Ag Leche from the Malian Saharan Tuareg rebel band, Tinariwen.

Between Pixies and Entrance tours, Paz Lenchantin hasn't been home for the last year. She says she's looking forward to some rest before writing again in earnest. "Just to see where I am as an independent music maker. I have been really enjoying playing solo as well. I did a tour where I was playing violin, bass, and singing and I enjoyed that a lot," she adds.

Gear-wise, Paz keeps it simple – a 1970 Precision that she's been playing for 15 years, generally with an Ampeg SVT through an 8x10" and with a Taurus Moog pedal, which is used only on 'Bag Boy' and 'Silver Snails' from the new Pixies album *Indie Cindy*. On smaller stages, Paz uses the Mesa Boogie 15" Walkabout combo.

"It has an awesome DI, is easy to carry around for smaller shows – it's super, super light and sounds great. People always say it sounds great but they can hardly see anything on stage. I love, love, love that amp," she smiles.

Even better, thinking back to those early days as a would-be bassist, she's designed her own signature Luna bass, which is inspired by the Precision but has practical qualities. "It definitely has the P-Bass feel but lighter and less intimidating if you're starting out – for the teenage girls out there starting out who want to play bass," she reveals.

Any other advice for young bassists starting out? "Playing bass is something you can do in your room on your own all of your life if you want to but I recommend playing along with music that doesn't have bass and making your own bass-line to songs you really love. Go to shows and play with other people. Everyone has his or her own style and there's a sort of freedom in not learning too much about how to do something 'right'.

"Do what sounds good – and don't worry about being right or wrong. It's your right, which is more important than anyone else's right when it comes to making art."

Info: @pazlenchantin

PURPLE DAZE

DEEP PURPLE'S FOUNDING BASSIST NICK SIMPER LOOKS BACK WITH HARRY PATERSON

You're in the car that crashed and killed Johnny Kidd of Johnny Kidd & The Pirates. You then go on to found Deep Purple, only to find yourself a member of an even more rarefied collective. Bassist Nick Simper – like original Beatle Pete Best – is a member of an exclusive club: musicians who founded, or co-founded, some of the biggest bands in rock'n'roll only to fall foul of their bandmates and find themselves sacked before the good times rolled.

Simper was Purple's bassist from 1968 to just over a year later, exiting the group in the summer of '69. The recent release of the retrospective *Hard Road: Deep Purple Mark 1, The Complete Studio Recordings 1968-69* package seems as good a time as any to catch up with Simper, who recorded three albums with the band. "We'd done a short tour of Denmark, and they really loved us over there," remembers the bassist, asked about the band's origins. "We went down really well so we were pretty buoyed up by that and as soon as we got back, management said, 'Right, you're in the studio, doing an album'."

Apart from the single 'Hush', the nascent Purple didn't really have any material suitable for recording. "The live show was pretty much extended jams," recalls Simper. "We'd been impressed with what Vanilla Fudge were doing, so we pretty much just cobbled a few things together and recorded the whole album in 18 hours straight. Two sessions of nine hours each, virtually live, barely any overdubs ."

The lead single 'Hush' helped the band enormously. A cover of Billy Joe Royal's song, Simper et al's version had little in common with the original; they created a driving, funk-infused slice of irresistible hard rock. Says Simper, "Me and Ritchie first heard it in a disco and we said, 'We should do this. This is a nice little number'. We knew it was going to be great before we'd even put the vocals down. We knew it would be a single. It just had that feel."

Simper's bass-line is brilliant in its simplicity and drive, propelling the song along on a deep groove that was an exponential improvement on the plodding, unimaginative original. "Yeah, it's nothing like it. There a few similar notes, and a few similar syncopated notes, but I didn't put them in the same place [as the original]. I guess most of it just came out of my own head and it just worked. It's great if you can make a number your own without even having heard the original properly."

Purple's follow-up albums performed respectably but didn't really move the band forward. As Simpler says, there was no time or space to consider the band's future direction or style. "That was the problem with the Mark I line-up. As soon as we got a bit of success, we were just worked to death. In the States we were doing three shows a night and our management didn't have a clue. 'Let's just work these guys to death and grab the big bucks while they last.'"

Something clearly had to give, and it turned out to be vocalist Rod Evans and Simper himself, who were promptly replaced. Blackmore and drummer Ian Paice offered various reasons for the sackings, all variations on the tired cliché of musical differences. Simper disagrees. "I know why it happened, and anything Ian Paice says is just BS. He never put a word in about anything, he'd never get involved in any arguments, any discussions. He'd say, 'Don't include me; I just want to play the drums'. He would have gone wherever the majority went. Rod Evans was bitter about that, because he got Paice in the band, and I had the casting vote that gave him the job. It was a simple matter of expediency."

Simper's bass-playing career began on a homemade instrument. "It was made by Ian Nelhams, the drummer in my first band, whose claim to fame was being Adam Faith's cousin." Now he's a Fender man: as he explains, "When I started taking bass seriously, I started with a '59 sunburst Precision which I got from Jim Marshall's first shop. It was absolutely beautiful."

Regarding amplification, Nick was originally a fan of Sunn and Acoustic, but the price and difficulty of obtaining reliable valves prompted a move towards a solid-state solution. These days Nick favours Trace Elliot amplification. "Damned good stuff. Absolutely stadium rock: it's so loud, but of course you don't have to be now."

Deep Purple may be long behind Simper, but readers are advised to check out the *Hard Road* box set. Still gigging, still writing and marking his 69th birthday in November, Simper's lifelong purple patch shows little sign of fading.

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12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst

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8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black

MUSICMAN

4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8250 - Musicman Sterling 4 String Bass, Blue
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
10962 - Overwater Inspiration 4, Blue Burst
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
13538 - Pro Martin Bass Guitar, Secondhand
7890 - Rickenbacker 4003, Jetglo
12405 - Spector Bass Performer 4 String, Black
11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
13337 - Spector Coda Pro 4 Black Cherry Stain
4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
13322 - Tanglewood Rebel Bass, Lefty, Used, Blk
13051 - Tobias Toby Deluxe IV Bass, Trans Amber

WestCoast

6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
6953 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
13390 - Yamaha TRBX174 4 String Bass, Black
13137 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass In Mist Green

5 String Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
11014 - Fender Jazz Bass 5 String
13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String In Walnut
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
12198 - MusicMan Stingray 5 Honeyburst
13306 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
12561 - Peavey Millenium BXP 5-String Bass
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
13204 - Sandberg California TM, Black, Used
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
11195 - Spector Bass Performer 5 Black SP5BK
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
13214 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Black
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
8275 - Yamaha BB425X,Sunburst, Used
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
8023 - Yamaha TRB1005J 5 String, Caramel Brown
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
13389 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass, Candy Apple Red
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses

8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
12351 - Ortega D Walker White Short Scale
10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
13472 - Tanglewood TW155A Acoustic Bass
13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar
12292 - Westfield PJB380 Acoustic Bass Natural

Electric Upright Basses

4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
13371 - Squier Vintage Modified Fretless Bass

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)

Ashdown Engineering

4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)
4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
11192 - Ashdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3 Combo
6459 - Ashdown ABM C210T-500 EVO 3 (2x10)
12259 - Ashdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
12258 - Ashdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10
11193 - Ashdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
13135 - Ashdown DH15 C110 Drophead Combo
13134 - Ashdown DH30 C115 Drophead Valve
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100 Combo
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Combo
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
8750 - Ashdown Perfect Ten 40 Bass Combo
13202 - Ashdown RM-C115-420 420w Combo
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Combo
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
13122 - Ashdown Vintage Twelve 75 Combo
8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Combo
13375 - Eden EC28 Bass Amp Combo
12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo
10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W)
13279 - MarkBass Markacoustic AC601 Combo
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W, 1x15)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
13516 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Combo
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Combo

PEAVEY

8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Combo
11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo
13372 - RM-C210T-420 420w 2 x 10 Rootmaster
6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X (120w,1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)

Bass Heads

13136 - Ashdown ABM400LITE Lightweight
4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
13131 - Ashdown CTM100 100W Valve Bass Head
11229 - Ashdown CTM15 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
13192 - Ashdown Five 15 BBH 220w Big Boy Head
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
10938 - Ashdown MIBASS 2.0 640w Small Bass Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
13203 - Ashdown RM Mag 420 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
13200 - Eden E300 Bass Amplifier
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13414 - Eden WT800 Bass Amp Head
13198 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
9349 - Hartke - 3 Models in stock now
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Bass Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Momark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Bass Head
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
5242 - Orange TB1000 1000W Terror
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets

8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
13377 - Eden D112XST Bass Cab
13376 - Eden D410XST Bass Cab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13197 - Eden EX112 Compact Bass Cab
13374 - Eden EX115 Bass Cab
13195 - Eden EX210 Bass Cab
13199 - Eden EX410 Bass Cabinet
13201 - Eden EX410SC Bass Cabinet
0000 - Hartke - 2 Models in Stock
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
5239 - Orange SP212 Smart Power Isobaric (2x12)
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

GREAT DANES

BGM REPORTS FROM BEHIND THE SCENES AT TC ELECTRONIC, HOME OF BASS AMPS, PEDALS AND TONEPRINTS TO DIE FOR...

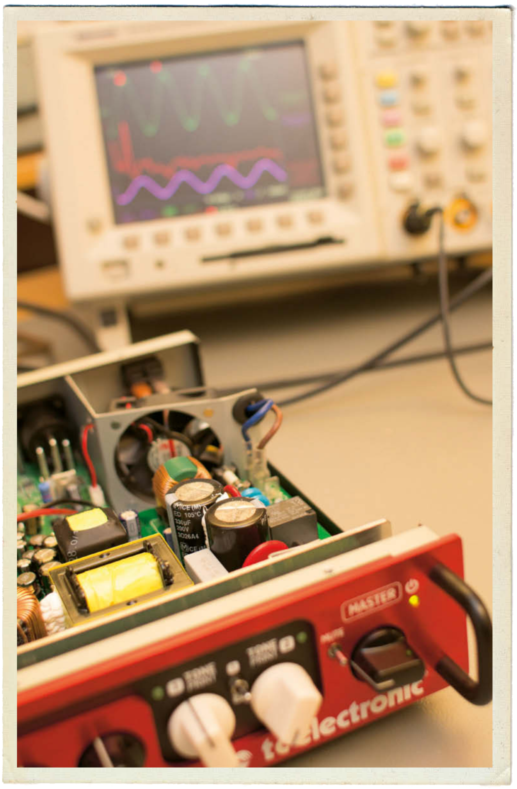
We like to think we're made of stern stuff here at the *BGM* command bunker, but getting up at 2.30am to make a pre-dawn flight from Stansted airport to Aarhus, Denmark, is enough to leave even the toughest bassist weak at the knees. As we sip our rocket-fuel-grade coffee in the departure lounge, watching pale, hungover passengers lurch zombie-like down the Stansted aisles, we are consoled by the fact that the trip ahead of us today is likely to be a pretty splendid one. We're off to TC Electronic, whose amps and effects pedals long-term readers will have seen many a time in this magazine, subjected to serious sonic punishment by our reviewers.

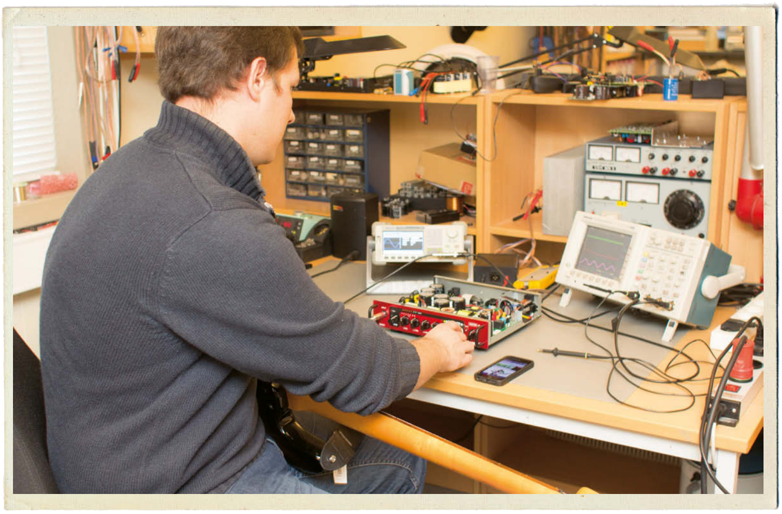
Touching down in Aarhus airport, in the middle of what seems to be an endless forest, we're picked up by TC's marketing supremo Kim Bang for the drive to the factory. This modern building, fairly unpretentious from the outside, turns out to be a kind of Scandinavian Tardis, housing endless rooms for the various functions required to run a globally-distributed manufacturing company, quite apart from the actual assembly zone.

On arrival Kim introduces us to Morten Ehlers, business manager in TC's bass department (the company also produces guitar and PA equipment, among other areas of activity). An affable chap who used to be a professional bassist until TC took him on as an apprentice some years ago, Morten has risen quickly through the company ranks to the point where he is responsible for overseeing existing bass production, introducing new ideas, refining existing technology, managing the roster of endorsers, recording new Toneprints and, yes, guiding visiting hacks around the facility. That'll keep him busy.

"It's a great time to be at TC Electronic," says Morten, leading us past reception into the first set of offices. "We have some interesting new products on the way and the number of endorsing bassists we have is going up all the time. The Toneprint technology has really taken off in recent years: it's especially cool to have British bass players like Mark King doing them for us."

After a quick stop to recaffeinate at one of the many refreshment zones dotted around the building, Morten takes *BGM* through the marketing and advertising departments, as





well as a quick hello at the helpdesk, where a gaggle of friendly British and French dudes answer your phone calls. Everyone without exception is very friendly. What's wrong with them – don't they know that we Brits prefer to be miserable? Maybe it's the quality of their coffee. Talking of which, we grab a quick latte, just to keep energy levels up.

Not that there's any need for an energy boost when Morten and Kim take us into their testing room, a chamber equipped with a bunch of cabs and TC's brand-new BH800 head, a gizmo that can level buildings at 50 metres but which you can fit in your guitar case. Firing it up and spinning through the many options, we dazzle the two TC-ers with our bass skills. Or at least we think we do, until they have a go and we realise how much we suck in comparison. It must be time for another coffee.

We head to the heart of the TC factory. First up is the Siemens room, a fairly terrifying metal chamber where the gear's radiation levels can be tested without rendering the Aarhus area uninhabitable for decades. Less spooky is Morten's product development zone, where blue-sky thinking is allowed to flourish, ideas run riot and several thousand amp and pedal components are stacked on the workers' desks.

"This is where all our crazy ideas come out," says Morten with a grin. His colleagues explain that he'll come up with concepts sometimes that defy their expectations, but that they consider it a personal challenge to achieve them. Without a PhD in advanced electronics it's impossible to know in depth what's going on in this room, in many ways the true core of TC's bass department, but Morten makes it easier for us by hooking up a TC amp to a computer and demonstrating how its internal settings can be adjusted without having to take the thing apart. It's incredibly impressive, a bit like stepping into a sci-fi movie, but with added bass and caffeine.

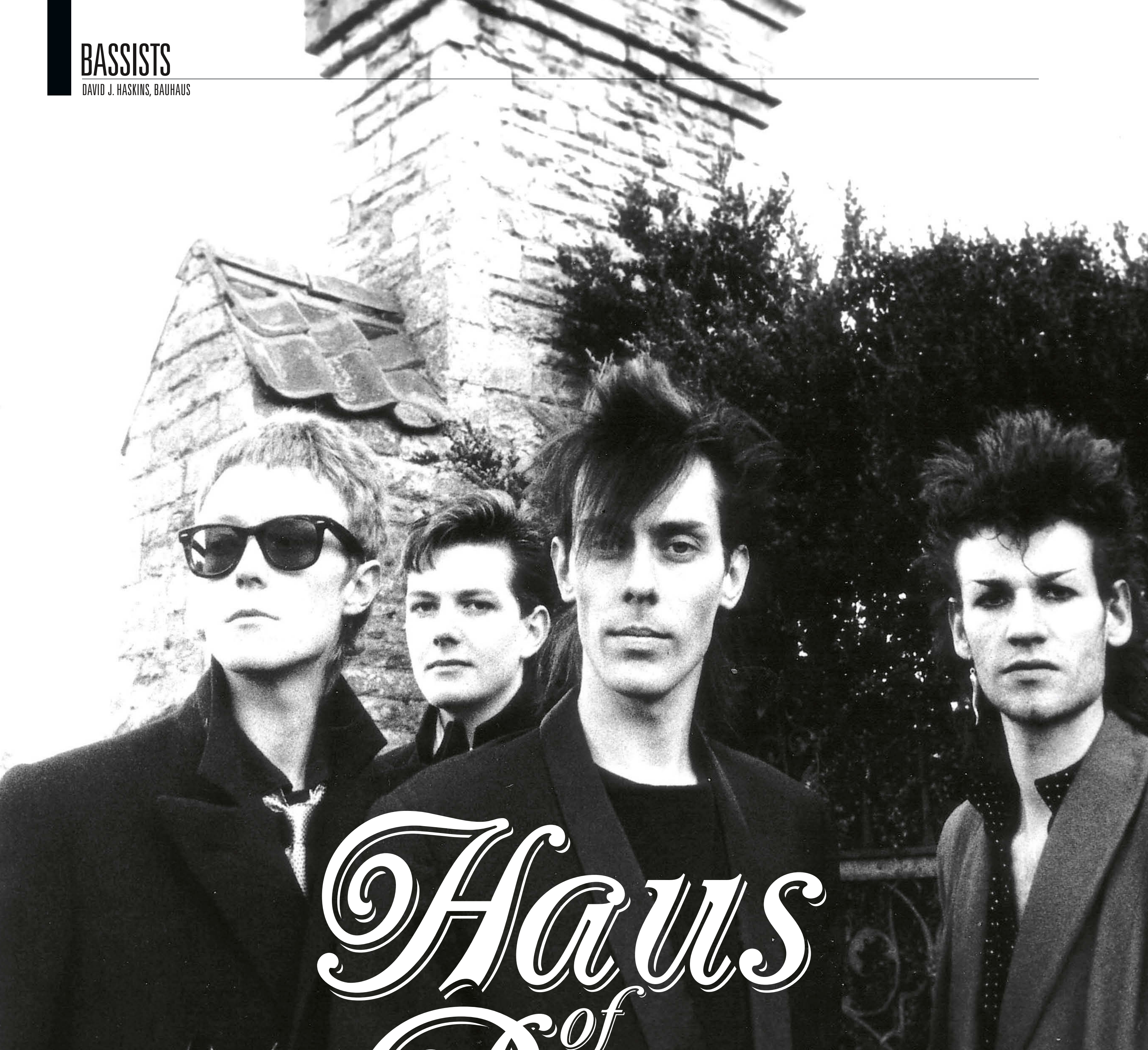
After lunch, which takes place next to a staff bar which opens on Friday nights for beer, table football and band jams, we take a peek at Morten's secret experimental zone. He swears us to secrecy first, so let's just say that he's working on various cool-but-classified stuff, like a mad scientist of the bass world. Then we check out the assembly line, where TC's Denmark-assembled products are bolted together by a pair of studious-working craftspeople at the rate of around five per day.

After a quick look at the 3D printer and endless rows of amps and components, we head out to a garage-like structure near the car park, where a TC amp was left on at full volume, all day and night, for (get this) two years to see what would happen. "It didn't break!" says Morten with justifiable pride, over a coffee.

Over dinner, Morten and Kim chat about TC's mission. "TC Electronic is one of the fastest growing brands in the industry over the last five years," says Morten. "It's really exciting to be involved in a company as successful as this one. We're going places!"

The rest of the evening is very entertaining, involving a certain number of Danish beers – solely for medicinal and research purposes, you understand. The next morning, as we queue up for the airport bus, we're knackered again. But it's nothing that a coffee won't fix. ■

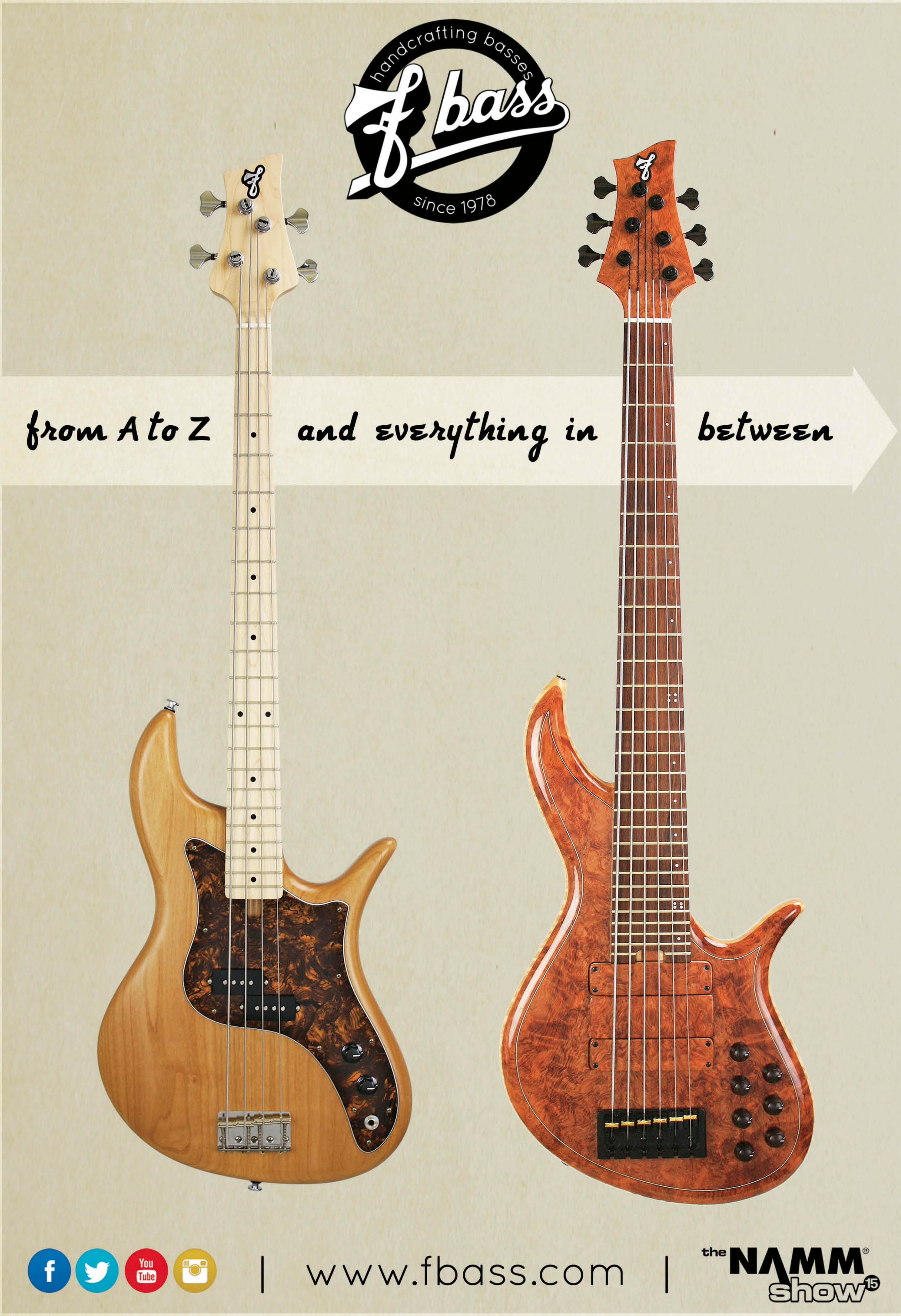
Info: www.tcelectronic.com



Haus of Bass

BAUHAUS BASSIST DAVID J. HASKINS HAS JUST RELEASED HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY — AND *BGM* BRINGS YOU AN EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT

Keep an eye out for *Who Killed Mister Moonlight? Bauhaus, Black Magick And Benediction* by David J. Haskins, published by Jawbone Press as you read this and one of the most revealing stories we've ever read on life at the bottom end of the '80s gothic rock scene. Asked about his life as a bass player, Haskins told us: "My first instrument was a horrible cheap electric six-string, bright red, with the top two strings taken off! My favourite bass ever to date is my current girl, still going strong since 1995, namely a Fender Precision fretless circa the golden year of 1972. My bass heroes are Errol 'Flabba' Holt, Paul McCartney, Danny Thompson, Fernando Saunders, Jah Wobble, James Jamerson, Donald 'Duck' Dunn, Charles Mingus, Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, John Entwistle, John Cale, Rob Wasserman, Robbie Shakespeare, Aston 'Family Man' Barrett, Paul Simonon and that bloke from Massive Attack. I haven't changed the strings on my bass since Bauhaus played Coachella in 2005. And my book? It's the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So help me, [Bauhaus singer] Peter Murphy!"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from A to Z and everything in between
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the NAMM show 15

Thanks to Haskins and his publisher Jawbone, we can present you with this exclusive extract from the book, taken from April 2006. Here, the reunited Bauhaus have just started work on *Go Away White*, their first studio album in two decades, but strange things are afoot in their California studio…

One explanation for poltergeist activity is that it is, in part, the result of psychological stress and pent-up sexual or aggressive emotions.

My Ampeg bass rig was set up in a small isolated room adjacent to the main studio, where I would play alongside the other band members. We were working on a track called 'Saved': a long, sinewy, atmospheric piece with a motorik Can-like drum part. I thought that I would try something very simple over it: a one-note pulse that would harmonise with the chord changes. It wasn't quite working, but I decided to persist. Suddenly, I lost power.

'What happened?' Jeff, one of the engineers, asked over the intercom.

'No idea!' I replied.

Ken dashed into the empty iso-booth to check out my amp.

'Did someone turn this off?'

'No!'

'Well, it's not on now!'

The amp had a large, heavy switch that sometimes required two hands to flip it, so this was very strange. The other engineer, Ken, raised an eyebrow, shrugged, and switched it back on. Peter then came out of his booth to work with me on the part.

Five minutes later, the same thing happened again. No power. The amp had been switched off.

Ken's voice crackled over the intercom. 'This is weird, guys!'

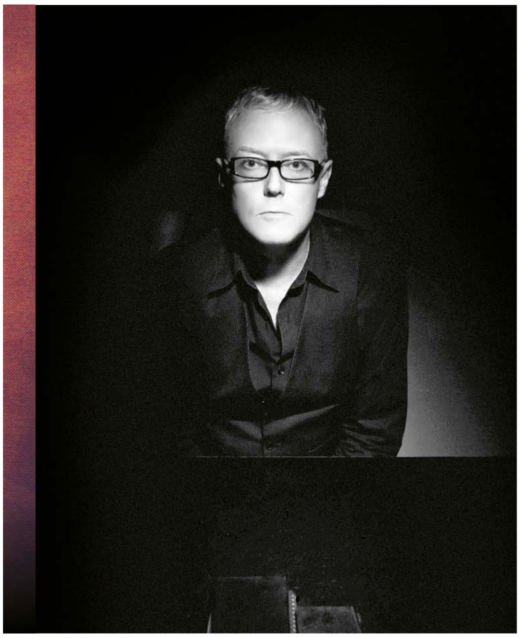
We decided to take a break. Peter suggested that we were being visited by a djinn – an Arabic term for a mischievous and perverse elemental spirit. It was my birthday a couple of days earlier, and Peter had presented me with some rare incense from Mecca. Now, I decided to burn it in the iso-room.

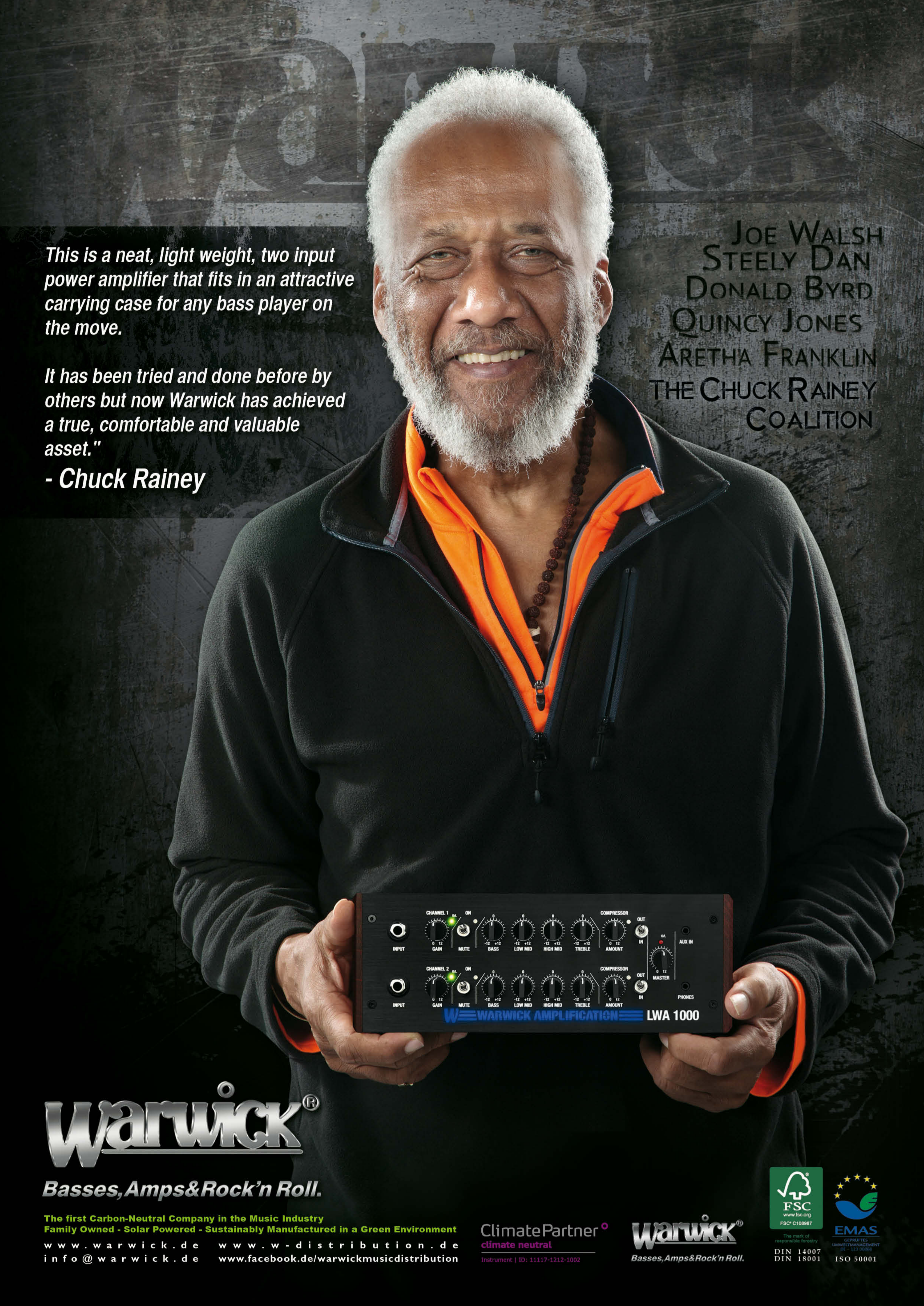
I placed a dish on the floor in front of the amp, lit the coal, and sprinkled the pungent incense. I sat down and spoke to whatever it was that had gained our attention. I told it that I wished to make peace and that, if it had anything to say, I was listening. Is there a message here? I thought.

Back in the main room, I reconsidered what I was playing. We ran through the song again, and instead of the original part, I started to play notes all over the shop, not an anchoring bass-line but more a spiralling arabesque. It worked very well, and the amp stayed on.

After laying down the part in two takes, I went back into the isolation booth, lit some more incense, and thanked the wise old djinn. I would repeat this action every day after that. The only time I did not, having removed the dish so that I could clean it, the amp once again switched itself off…

Info: www.davidjonline.com, www.jawbonepress.com.





This is a neat, light weight, two input power amplifier that fits in an attractive carrying case for any bass player on the move.
It has been tried and done before by others but now Warwick has achieved a true, comfortable and valuable asset."
- Chuck Rainey
Joe Walsh
Steely Dan
Donald Byrd
Quincy Jones
Aretha Franklin
The Chuck Rainey Coalition
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F BASS BN5

AT CLOSE TO THREE GRAND, THIS FIVE-STRING OUGHT TO BE PRETTY F-ING SPECIAL. JOEL MCIVER GETS TO GRIPS WITH THIS CLASSY CANADIAN...

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

F Bass's products occupy an interesting price point, neither down among the densely-populated, mid-budget zone around £1,000, nor up in la-la-land with the super-luxurious instruments we feature in this magazine on a regular basis. At £2,800, F's slick-looking BN5 should be pretty much flawless in design and all encompassing in tone, but then again, it's half the price (or less) than certain models by Status, Rikkers, Fodera and Ritter, which we've reviewed in recent times. Go figure, as our transatlantic readers say. Whatever you get for your money, though, it had better be a lot. Let's dig in!

BUILD QUALITY

Hoist the BN5 out of its chunky, padded gig-bag and you'll be struck by the body, a beautifully shaped slab of ash – not exactly a lightweight wood, but not the heaviest on the market either – that has been not so much chamfered as completely rounded off. The upper horn is pretty much cylindrical in profile, an aesthetic touch that we rather like. The body is slim, but not in any way insubstantial. The pickup covers are the same colour as the body and the units beneath them are, we are told, handwound. The control knobs are handmade too, from African blackwood, a material used in clarinets and bassoons – apparently because it is close to unbreakable. The tuners are solid, the four-bolt neck joint and battery compartment tightly sealed with no visible gaps, and the bridge a chunk of immovable black metal.

Note that the BN5 comes equipped with F Bass's own Stainless Steel Exposed Core strings, which might give you the fear a bit: the clue is in their name. The point at which the strings contact the bridge is literally the exposed core, a hair-like bit of wire, which may make nervous readers want to moan 'It's going to break!' Don't worry, though: the level of craftsmanship that has gone into this slinky five-string is obvious. Even the slightly unconventional bottom end of the bass, where the jack socket is positioned to allow the cable to extend horizontally rather than downwards, is a player-friendly idea. Finally, access to the truss rod is unparalleled thanks to the carved-out chamber leading up to it. All very encouraging.

> "THE ACTIVE MODE IS WHAT YOU'RE PAYING FOR, SO SLAP THAT TONE CONTROL BACK INTO PLACE AND HAVE SOME FUN"

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

The BN5 has two main strengths: its neck and its electronics. The usefulness of the former is obvious: it's highly playable, with 22 stainless steel frets and a super-low action which gives you that welcome sensation of being a far better bassist than you actually are. The 34.5" scale gives the low B string a firmness that conventional scale lengths lack, say F Bass, and in this case the B string is certainly a thing of beauty, with absolutely no sag or flappiness and delivering a sustained, clearly voiced note. The neck profile is solid but fast, refusing to sacrifice gravitas for speed: groove lines and slap parts are wholly at home here.

As for the tone circuit, a lot of high IQs have obviously been at work in F Bass's workshop. The top three controls are neck volume, bridge volume and passive/active tone, the last of which is this instrument's secret weapon. Ignore the active bass,

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £2,749
MADE IN | Canada
BODY | Ash
NECK | Three-piece quartersawn maple
FINGERBOARD | Quartersawn maple
SCALE LENGTH | 34.5"
FRETS | 22
WIDTH AT NUT | 45mm
STRING SPACING | 19mm at bridge
PICKUPS | 2 x F Bass stacked, single coil/ hum-cancelling magnetic pickups
CONTROLS | 2 x volume, passive/active tone, three-band EQ, coil tap, all in handmade African blackwood
TUNERS | Gotoh
BRIDGE | Hipshot B Style
STRINGS | F Bass Stainless Steel Exposed Core
WEIGHT | 4kg
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED? Gig bag
LEFT-HAND AVAILABLE? Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | B-string sounds great; ace truss-rod access; a very playable bass
MINUS | Doesn't necessarily stand out from its contemporaries
OVERALL | A superb, versatile instrument, the BN5 should supply all your tonal needs

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY ■■■■■■■■■■
SOUND QUALITY ■■■■■■■■■□
VALUE ■■■■■■■□□□

mid and treble boost controls underneath for a moment and pull the tone control out. The range of tones, even in passive mode, is astounding. Dial it up and there's the big sound you want, modifiable with either pickup volume and ranging from a thunderous low end – and we do mean thunderous, especially on that low B – to a crisp, brand-new-strings top. Helpfully, the six controls all have clearly visible centre detentes: my personal bugbear is tiny, impossible-to-see-on-stage control knob markers, so the BN5's tone range is a pleasure to navigate for that reason alone.

Of course, the active mode is what you're paying for, so slap that tone control back into place and have some fun. The three-band EQ is boost-only, so the lowest setting for each frequency range is essentially the natural sound of the instrument. Wind up the bass and you're given a truly monstrous bottom end, the kind that kills cows at 100 yards: take it easy with that one. The mid and treble boosts are pretty polite in comparison: in fact, if you're looking for truly ear-bleeding top end that shatters glasses, this isn't the bass for you. What we have here is a subtle treble rather than a venomous one, and a good thing too.

There's also a coil tap, activated by pulling out the bridge pickup control, which gives you the expected reduced power and sort-of-vintage tone. This might come in useful if the bass boost gets slightly out of control, as it might do in the hands of an inexperienced engineer or amp tech. Or you could simply flip into passive mode, disabling the boosts completely. What's great is that BN5's controls have been designed with the working, performing bass player in mind: a bassist who doesn't have the time to fool around with switches (or, heaven forfend, microswitches) because the next song starts in three... two... one...

CONCLUSION

The BN5 is a great bass. F will let you tweak it for an upcharge (options include a 34" scale length, a five-piece neck, 24 frets, various alternate bridge designs and string spacings, plus a neck-thru construction) so there's plenty of leeway for customising it to your exact spec. Our only minor criticism, and it really is a minor one, is that it's not a massively exciting bass. The tones are too familiar for it to stand head and shoulders above its contemporaries, so shop around before you buy. If you do decide to take the plunge, though, you won't regret it.

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Jule Potter 'Monique' Dovecage Pre-Amp, Demeter 'Minnie' 800D Power Amp

AUDIOPHILES ARE USED TO PAYING TOP DOLLAR FOR HIGH-QUALITY AUDIO, RIGHT? MIKE BROOKS TAKES A LOOK AT TWO BASS EQUIVALENTS

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

Let's cut to the chase: these two products from Jule Monique and James Demeter are handcrafted, limited-edition boutique amplification and come with a pricetag that reflect the care and craftsmanship put into them. Bass Gear in Twyford are bringing these beauties into the UK for our delectation and, in much the same way as audio fans constantly seek the perfect audio experience, these components follow a similar remit, with James Demeter striving to produce the best bass reproduction available and Jule Potter attempting to craft the perfect bass valve amp out there.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

Both units are handmade, handwired and assembled in the US – and the attention to detail shows. The Dovecage amp is eye-catching to say the least, although it is available in several different formats such as a bamboo-finished case (looking not unlike a radio), the Tardis (a more conventional amp design) and a powered or pre-amp only two-space, 19-

inch rackmount. Measuring in at 10 inches wide, six inches deep and eight inches tall, first impressions are that it's very much a niche product and probably won't appeal to most bass players who gig on a regular basis but in all fairness, it has the credentials to power through any band mix, particularly when paired with this power amp. Although small intimate gigs and recording environments are its most likely applications, this combination would be more than loud enough for most gigs.

Both units are minimalist and refined to a fault but as with the best hi-fi equipment, what they lack in frills and features is made up for in sound quality, sensitivity and tone. The amp grille protects the valves and innards while offering cooling to the most heat-sensitive components as well as providing an impressive visual basis for the amp. The front control panel features the power switch, blue jewel power indicator and controls for Line Level (push/pull for +4dB boost to Line Level and XLR outputs), High, Mid, Low and Sensitivity (push/pull for +4dB boost for passive pickups) followed by the Input socket. The EQ is a 'Baxandall' design, three-phase EQ providing the player with +/-20dB of cut and boost. The rear panel has a balanced XLR output with ground switch, a balanced out level control, line out jack socket and power socket. We're talking minimal here! The Minnie power amp has even fewer features: power switch and indicator, volume control, input jack socket, fan control switch, two Speakon outputs and the power socket.

"SONICALLY, I CAN'T FAULT THIS RIG, BUT I WOULD NEED TO LIVE WITH IT IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS TO FULLY APPRECIATE ITS VERSATILITY AND EXQUISITE PERFORMANCE"

SOUND QUALITY

Looks aside, the sounds are really what count here: for our test I hooked up to an EBS Neo 2x12 cabinet. For comparison I used a passive Fender Jazz, an active Ritter and an active Fodera. The tonal quality is impressive indeed and with this setup, without frills and tricks to cloud what you are hearing, the true character of the valves and the available performance level is crystal clear. The warmth and rich tonal colouring on display is a joy to hear, while the harmonic delivery and resonance of each instrument is brought to the fore: the character of each bass truly comes across in a defined manner. Having said that, if you want to push the valves progressively harder, you can sonically pick out the detail as the grind and rasp become gradually thicker and dirtier. Digging in with your fingers or using a pick gives the signal further attack and character, the pre-amp conveying the finer nuances with authority.

There is something pleasing about natural distortion from valves as they are pushed to perform, and this setup illustrates this perfectly. The power and brute force offered by the power amp is a perfect match for the Monique pre-amp, yet at no point does the sonic display sound harsh or forced, it simply sounds as though the amp can take anything you wish to throw at it. The push/pull features are a bonus, especially when using the passive Fender Jazz. There was an additional boost to the sound, but it also allowed the active pickups on the other basses to be distorted a little further if I wanted them to have a less clinical tone.

CONCLUSION

When players such as Dave Swift and Paul Turner use a product, it is usually with good reason, and in this case, it doesn't take a genius to appreciate that this is high end, quality gear with a capital Q. Sonically, I can't fault this rig, but I would need to live with it in a variety of situations to fully appreciate its versatility and exquisite performance. It's hardly surprising that the whole package is expensive, but then boutique equipment, by its very nature, will always cost significantly more than mass produced equipment. But if you care about your sound and are looking for a lightweight, portable setup with tonal reproduction to die for, look no further.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

JULE POTTER 'MONIQUE' DOVECAGE PRE-AMP
PRICE | £985
MADE IN | USA
CONTROLS | Power switch, line level (push/pull for +4dB boost to line level and XLR outputs), three-band EQ (high, mid, low +/-20dB cut/boost), sensitivity (push/pull for +4dB boost for passive pickups), ground switch, balanced out level
INPUTS | ¼-inch jack input (passive & active)
OUTPUTS | Balanced DI XLR output, ¼-inch jack line out output
DIMENSIONS | 203mm (H) x 254mm (W) x 152mm (D)
WEIGHT | 3.8kg (8.3lb)

DEMETER 'MINNIE' 800D POWER AMP
PRICE | £885
MADE IN | USA
CONTROLS | Power switch, volume, fan switch
INPUTS | ¼-inch jack input
OUTPUTS | 2 x Speakon output (8 ohms), 1 x ¼-inch jack output
POWER OUTPUT | 800 watts at 4 ohms, 500 watts at 8 ohms
DIMENSIONS | 59mm (H) x 254mm (W) x 152mm (D
WEIGHT | 1.6kg (3.5 lb)
IMPEDANCE | 4/8/16 ohms

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Lightweight, classy with finesse by the bucketful. Exemplary bass tone coupled with the warmth of valves.
MINUS | The Dovecage may not take to life on the road so opt for a different design format. The price isn't pocket friendly but this is to be expected
OVERALL | This is the real deal, quality craftsmanship and design in one package from two leading lights of bass tone reproduction. Listen and enjoy!

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	10/10
SOUND QUALITY	10/10
VALUE	8/10

ANACONDA

Tribute J4E Elite, Crusher CXE6 Elite

THERE'S A NEW, SERPENTINE BASS-MAKER ON THE BLOCK. DOES THIS SNAKE RATTLE, ASKS MIKE BROOKS?

Anaconda Basses
www.anacondabasses.co.uk

Anaconda Basses is a newly-formed company, fronted by Andrew Taylor-Cummings, a bass player himself. His Tribute and Crusher models are prime examples of the standard of instrument Andrew is creating at his workshop in North London, so how do they stack up?

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ANACONDA CRUSHER CXE6
PRICE | £2199 (-£300 for satin finish)
COLOUR | Natural
BODY: Ash with flame/quilted maple top and dyed black sycamore veneer
NECK | Maple
FINGERBOARD | Wenge
PICKUPS | Bartolini soapbar pickups x 2
ELECTRONICS | Glockenklang three-band EQ
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull for active/passive operation), pickup pan, bass, middle, treble (variable tone control in passive operation), series/parallel selector switch for each pickup
TUNERS | Hipshot Ultralite
BRIDGE | Hipshot A-style brass
MADE IN | UK
NUT WIDTH | 55mm
NECK JOIN | Bolt-on, six bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 35" (889mm)
FRETS | 24
WEIGHT | 5kg (11lbs 1oz)
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED | Soft case/gig bag
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A very playable six-string bass, handbuilt with plenty of tonal options – a harmonically rich and resonant bass
MINUS | Some may find the scale and body size a little restrictive but it's a six-string bass, it's par for the course
OVERALL | A desirable six-string with enough tonal prowess to cope with any musical situation

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

BUILD QUALITY

Both basses look extremely elegant and have been crafted with great care and attention to detail: the timber selection, hardware and electronics choices have all been considered at some length. The Tribute model has obvious leanings towards Jazz bass territory while the Crusher has a fuller, rounded shape to offer a more comfortable playing experience.

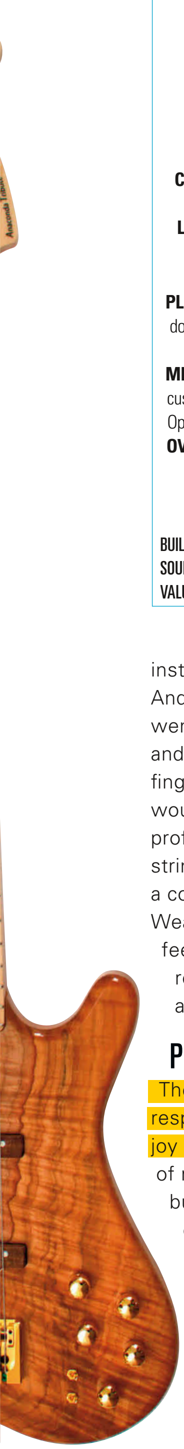
Both basses utilise the same control layout (volume, pan, three-band EQ) and come equipped with the same Glockenklang circuit: specific pickups from Bartolini and Woodhead have been chosen to achieve a desired sound for each bass. Both basses come with series/parallel switches to offer further tonal switching capabilities: the parallel setting provides a more restrained delivery while switching to series mode boosts both the top and bottom end delivery and makes the midrange more pronounced.

The Tribute model is blinged to the max, with gold hardware, a brass handcut nut, Hipshot A-style brass bridge and machine heads and mother-of-pearl front position markers, but it all looks tasteful. The gloss finish shows off the honey-tinged 5A figured maple top, and the mix of timbers combine to create a truly stunning bass, topped off by the wooden covers used on the Woodhead pickups. The rounded neck profile feels like the perfect combination of a Precision and a Jazz, and the fret ends have been rolled smooth. With only the slightest camber to the fingerboard, this is one sleek, fast neck. The body is a standard thickness and depth but the contouring and chambered core give the bass a sensible weight, which makes it balance extremely well.

As a six-string with a 35" scale, the Crusher is inevitably larger and slightly heavier but it still balances well. The gloss finished swamp ash body is capped with a 4A figured maple top, which contrasts well with the black hardware, and this has also been applied to the matching headstock. The maple and wenge neck laminates also add to the naturally organic look of the

> "THERE IS NO DISPUTING THE CALIBRE OF BOTH BASSES AND ANDREW SHOULD BE CONGRATULATED ON THE HIGH STANDARD HE HAS ACHIEVED WITH BOTH INSTRUMENTS"

www.anacondabasses.co.uk



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ANACONDA TRIBUTE J4E

PRICE | £1800 (-£300 for satin finish)
COLOUR: Natural
BODY | Ash core (chambered) with 5A figured maple top and dyed black sycamore veneer
NECK | Rock maple
FINGERBOARD | Maple
PICKUPS | Woodhead diagonal J single coil pickups x 2
ELECTRONICS | Glockenklang three-band EQ
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull for active/passive operation), pickup pan, bass, middle, treble (variable tone control in passive operation), series/parallel selector switch for each pickup
TUNERS | Hipshot Ultralite elephant ear tuners
BRIDGE | Hipshot A-style brass
MADE IN | UK
NUT WIDTH | 39mm
NECK JOIN | Bolt-on, five bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 34" (864mm)
FRETS | 21
WEIGHT | 4.8kg (10lb 6oz)
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED | Soft case/gig bag
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | An exemplary instrument that will no doubt appeal to a lot of players, great tonal palette and supreme playability
MINUS | Not cheap but sensibly priced for a custom hand-built instrument of this quality. Opt for a satin finish to bring the price down
OVERALL | A great example of the standard of instrument Anaconda are building

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

instrument. This bass features Andrew's favoured quartersawn wenge fingerboard (for looks and tone) and although the fingerboard feels broad as you would expect, the depth and rear profile of the neck and the 19mm string spacing help to make this a comfortable playing machine. Wearing the bass, you can feel it resonate: the harmonic response and character come across immediately.

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

The Tribute model is amazingly responsive and an absolute joy to play. There are plenty of modern sounds on offer, but also a good selection of traditional tones that aren't so EQ-dependent. Andrew has obviously done his homework, creating a bass that takes inspiration from the perennial Jazz but elaborates on its best qualities, creating a superb instrument in the process. There is plenty of mid and top end sparkle should you need it, but backing it up is a solid and powerful bottom end. The mid control offers a dramatic scoop, but leaving it flat or boosted slightly shows how much tonal spring this bass has. The pickups have been wound to Andrew's specification and the offset pole pieces sense a wider area of resonance, which results in a fuller, punchier sound than you might expect.

Should you find the EQ a little overpowering, trim pots can be found in the control cavity to wind in some of the excess on offer. The passive performance is strong in its own right and this is helped by the inclusion of the vintage tone control, but setting the pickup switches to series and kicking in the active circuit is when this bass really shines. With its hybrid Jazz body shape and a useful level of body chamfering and contouring, you may find this bass hard to put down.

The Crusher has a piano-like tone and every note is well defined and consistent across the whole neck. The low B string is particularly forthright, the low notes really standing out, while the high C sounds full and bright in equal measure. Naturally, the timber choices contribute to the woody tones, but the electronics package helps to show off the finer qualities this bass possesses. Every tone you could wish for in a six-string bass is on offer here. The setup contributes to the exceptional playability, while the overall tonal performance is crisp, defined and pleasing. Although some players may be put off by the six-string concept, this could well be the exception that converts you.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no disputing the calibre of both basses, and Andrew should be congratulated on the high standard he has achieved with both instruments. Tonally and visually, these are excellent examples of his work and anyone looking for a new bass in this price range would be well advised to add Anaconda Basses to their list.

MONTAGE

PRO 115FR Full Range Bass Cabinet

A FULL 15 INCHES OF BASS, ASSESSED AND ANALYSED BY DAVE CLARKE

Lean Business
www.lean-business.co.uk

Eighteen years ago, I possessed unshakable faith in the misguided opinion that what the world needed was my crap rock band. Accordingly, it made perfect sense that I should possess a bass cab that matched the stature of my delusion. In this regard, I did not fail.

Within that old cab's walls lurked a 1x18 speaker and its 2x10 accomplices, and when I drove to Cambridge's Drum & Guitar Centre I realised my bright orange Mini Metro was no longer fit for purpose. With the cab sticking out the back of the car, I clearly recall my dad sounding like Chief Brody in Jaws when he observed: "You're gonna need a bigger car."

Adding to the 'new car' scenario, I'm also yet to live with anyone who's happy about sharing his or her living space with a speaker-filled monolith.

My point is that, until recently, big bass cabs have been a thorn in my side. Thankfully, technology has made the life of the working bassist a much more enjoyable affair over the past decade, and recently Montage has come to the table with a new range of cabinets. Had they done so in the mid-1990s, there's a chance I might still be driving an orange car.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

The Montage PRO 15" Bass Guitar Full Range Cabinet contains the company's top-of-the-range driver. Its manufacturers make the bold claim that its performance can be compared to a 1x15 plus 4x10 stack or an 8x10, but at

"THIS IS A CAB BEST SUITED FOR CLUB AND MEDIUM-SIZED VENUES, AND WHILE THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A MARKET FOR THE BASS-AGEDDON STACKS OF THE WORLD, THIS MONTAGE CAB IS WORTH TAKING SERIOUSLY AS A CONVENIENT ALTERNATIVE"

half the size and weight. Now, if this is the case, I'll be re-christening this cab 'The Stack Slayer'.

A bit of back-story is needed here to understand the thinking behind this product. Montage started life a few years ago with the goal of designing a range of UK made and imported 'empty' guitar cabinets that can readily accept virtually any 10", 12" or 15" guitar drivers. The idea was that customers could either load their own drivers or choose from over 100 pre-existing types, and Lean would assemble the cabinet for them.

The next stage was to design a set of cabinets specifically for bass guitar, which was a slightly more complicated issue due to bass cabs using a different set of principles. Fundamentally, the bass cabinet's volume and port dimensions need to be tuned to suit the driver that is going to be placed inside it. Another consideration is that bass drivers are considerably more demanding on the cabinet, therefore the cabinet must be stronger. Another important design factor was portability and weight.

Having looked at the competition, Montage decided on using a higher specification driver which has enabled them to use a more compact cabinet design, but one that is tuned to accept a handful of carefully picked drivers that give players a choice, catering for various budgets.

They also looked at more traditional designs, such as 1x15, 4x10 and 8x10, all fairly big and, in Montage's humble opinion, not very efficient at what they trying to achieve sonically. Using their PA knowhow, Montage was confident they could create alternative types of speakers. To do just that, Montage use a modern coaxial speaker which smoothly incorporates a full range in one driver.

Essentially, coaxials are two speakers in one; in the case of the cabinet we tested, it is a 15" bass driver with a 2" compression driver fixed to

its back, keeping the cabinet compact in the process. The 15" bass driver is a highly efficient 99dB (maximising your wattage), while the 2" compression driver throws its sound through the centre of the bass unit and uses the 15" cone to 'flare' the sound across a wide area. The compression driver is also intended to be highly efficient in the mid-band section, in excess of the performance which 4x10 drivers usually achieve. The same compression driver also provides high frequencies up to 16khz: ideal for bassists who like using tweeters. The high-tolerance crossover specifically designed for this coaxial maximises the wattage to each driver, without wasting watts by sending them where they can't be used efficiently. Got all that? Then read on...

IN USE

The cabinet is built using dense Baltic birch (which stops colouration) and features an 18mm baffle, 15mm wall thickness for reduced weight and internal bracing for added rigidity. The cab is then lined with acoustic wadding to stop any standing waves. Externally, the cab accepts NL4 connection or a ¼" jack, has a black metal grille, stands on rubber feet, has two solid carry handles, and is coated with a highly durable,

scratch-resistant paint. The overall weight comes in at 26kg – not bad, especially if it does actually sound like a stack...

When testing the cab I was constantly switching from the Montage to my own cab as I attempted to hear the difference. I was a little cynical as to whether the Montage could deliver on its promise of the mid-range and top end you'd get with a stack, while still retaining a thunderous bottom end. However, I have to say that I did notice a difference, especially when slapping or playing notes in the middle and upper reach of the neck. It simply had a little more depth to the sound compared to my standard cab, and adding a pinch of sub-harmonic effect to the mix made for a particularly pleasing sound, with smooth transitions between the low, mid and high frequencies.

As you would expect for a cab in this price range, it ably handled the lower end abuse I was imposing, and only struggled to cope when I unfairly inflicting dub reggae EQ settings to the mix. This is in no way a criticism: I wanted to push it to the limit and like most cabs of this size it has one. That said, it took a fair degree of pounding before the proverbial white flag appeared. For me, the key feature was all about those mid and high range frequencies, and there was a difference – on that front the Montage delivers on its promise. Of course, it can only do so much but, fair play, it sounds better than the cab I normally gig with. That said it's also considerably heavier. Pros and cons…

CONCLUSION

If you're going to spend £700-plus on a cabinet, the chances are you'll be looking to see what the market has to offer in exchange for your hard-earned cash. The difference this cab makes might be subtle and therefore perhaps not quite worthy of the 'stack slayer' nickname, but it's enough of a USP to be worthy of investigation.

Realistically, this is a cab best suited for club and medium-sized venues, and while there will always be a market for the bass-ageddon stacks of the world, this Montage cab is worth taking seriously as a convenient alternative, if not an out-and-out replacement. Ironically, I'm in no doubt that a stack made up of Montage cabs would sound ridiculously good. One last thing: the Montage has a no-frills look about it, but if you're more concerned with how your cab looks over how it sounds, then you probably need to access your priorities.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE £699.95
FEATURES | Coaxial 15" loudspeaker with 2" compression driver
FREQUENCY | Range 35Hz to 16000Hz
DIMENSIONS | 58cm x 50cm x 40cm
WEIGHT | 26kg

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A rock solid cabinet, with a USP that's worth checking out
MINUS | It's not the lightest beast on the market
OVERALL | Montage has delivered a cab that does what it says on the tin. Will it replace the stack? Of course not. However, those looking for a convenient alternative might find what they are looking for

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY ■■■■■■■■□□
SOUND QUALITY ■■■■■■■■□□
VALUE ■■■■■■■■□□

HOMEBREW ELECTRONICS
HB Hematoma Bass Overdrive/Preamp

LOOKING FOR A SOLID STOMPBOX WITH PLENTY OF DRIVE? LOOK NO FURTHER, SAYS KEV SANDERS

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

If you're in the market for a good bass overdrive pedal, there's never been a better choice. There are dozens to choose from and a few, like this Hematoma from boutique effects pedal maker Homebrew Electronics, even offer a separate preamp channel. Like many players, I've been using a SansAmp Bass Driver for years, so it will be interesting to see how the Hematoma compares to this and other bass overdrives.

It certainly compares well in terms of construction. The cast aluminium case and steel back plate look like they'll take years of being kicked around a stage. Inside, the internal components are all top quality too, with the kind of hand-soldered craftsmanship that's only really seen these days in the best (and most expensive) effects and amps.

Anyway, time to plug in the bass and see how it sounds. First impressions are good. Like all the HBE effects I've tried, the switching is totally silent but for the reassuring clunk of the sturdy metal foot-switches. There's absolutely no hum, whether used with a battery or the supplied PSU. With neither the bass preamp (BP) or the bass overdrive (BO) switched in, the signal from the bass seems to be completely unaffected as it passes through the pedal. This is important and is no doubt down to the quality of internal components as much as the careful routing circuits.

The first thing to say is that although the preamp can be used separately if required, the Hematoma is really more an overdrive with an added gain stage, rather than a bass preamp in the way that the Radial Bassbone

or SansAmp is. However, with just the BP button pressed and its bright yellow LED lit, you get a useful 5db of gain from the pre-gain control and like the rest of the functions, it works in a smooth, linear way, gently increasing the level from your bass without colouring the tone.

The BO switch also has a yellow on/off LED, and this is where we get down to business. It's not what you'd call subtle, and even with the gain turned right down, there's still a noticeable distortion. Crank it up though, and things get serious. The good news is that your bass losses virtually none of its frequency range, as can happen with some overdrive pedals. You still get all the low end frequencies coming out that went in, and although I detect a tiny bit of compression, it's natural and a positive addition if anything.

With both the BO and the BP switched on, there's an infinite variation of overdrives available and experimenting with the pre-gain, level and gain controls, you can soon call up anything from a nasty '70s bass fuzz to a truly demonic, speaker-wrecking distortion. The tone control is a real bonus, and gives you a smooth clockwise sweep from bass to treble. The EQ shift switch is fairly subtle, but further increases the range of EQ available, giving you a slightly darker tone when switched to the right.

In terms of sound and quality the Hematoma seems to tick all the boxes, but if I have a bit of a whinge, it's regarding the aesthetics. It may offer bomb-proof construction and top rate components, but the screen printing and layout, not to mention the rather incongruous purple 'chicken-head' pre-gain control, all look a bit like a radio enthusiast's home-built electronics project. Maybe that's intentional: after all the company is called Home Brew Electronics, but on a dark stage the mid-blue printing against the matt black background is quite hard to see. You have to squint to see where the black tone, level and gain controls are all set.

As an overdrive, it's not as smooth as the EBS Valvedrive or the Dunlop Way Huge Pork Loin (where do they get these names from?), and as a preamp it's not as versatile as the SansAmp or Bassbone, but it's not really meant to be. If you're looking for a versatile bass overdrive pedal rather than a dedicated preamp, and like the idea of having some of the most extreme distortion effects available, the HBE Hematoma is definitely worth a listen.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE £199
MADE IN USA
FEATURES Gain, Tone, Level, EQ Shift, Pre-Gain controls, BO and BP switches
POWER 9v DC
DIMENSIONS 177 x 101 x 76mm
WEIGHT 680g

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Solid construction and plenty of extreme distortion effects available. Preamp and overdrive can be used together or separately. PSU included
MINUS | Doesn't really look like a top quality piece of kit. Not exactly subtle
OVERALL | If most bass overdrives just aren't cutting it for you, try the Hematoma. It may not look like much, but you'll certainly not be left wanting more distortion

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY ■■■■■■■■■□
SOUND QUALITY ■■■■■■■■□□
VALUE ■■■■■■■□□□

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THE FRONT LINE

WANT TO MAKE IT AS A PROFESSIONAL BASSIST? LISTEN UP AS BGM'S PROFESSIONAL BASS TEAM REPORTS BACK FROM THE LIVE STAGE

THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Jazz maestro Ruth doffs a hat to the educators

I just recently started teaching again on a regular basis, and I'm really happy to be passing on some of the things that various teachers have taught me about playing the bass. I was lucky with the teachers I had, as they were a great inspiration to me. My first ever teacher on bass was a brilliant bass player called Nico Gomez. He taught me from when I was a beginner and, with lots of patience, coached me through the basics of harmony, reading, playing groove, and getting stronger at playing in time. I took so much away from these lessons. The most important thing he taught me was to be creative within my exercises. He would explain something in principle, and then make me come up with different ways to achieve that particular goal. He made me aware that if you set yourself strict limitations within an exercise, the learning process will be more thorough, no matter what the subject is. For example, when I first started to learn how to improvise, I remember getting lost by playing too much. My ideas were unclear, my lines were without shape and I tried to overtake myself by playing things that I only knew in theory. He then got me to improvise with three notes only: a triad, for instance. It is difficult to be musical with just three notes, but when I started playing little lines with those three notes, I knew I was getting better. I also started practising different scales over a single chord. For instance I recorded a simple minor chord on my computer and played it on a loop: I then played for hours through all the different minor scales I could think of in order to internalise each of their sounds. Later at university, my teacher Dudley Phillips taught me the importance of transcription and learning other people's playing. This is also something I treat seriously, and I encourage all my students to do the same. It's always good to go back and reassess the basics: these studies are for life, it doesn't matter how advanced a bassist you are.

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

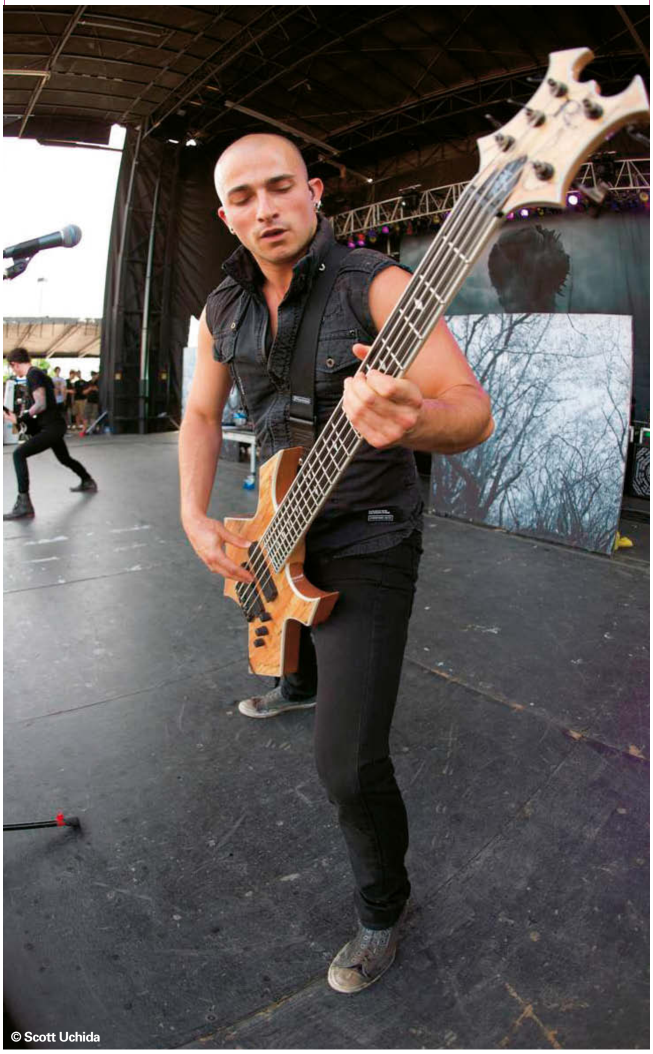
THE METALHEAD

PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium's bassist takes a moment to appreciate

I haven't had much time in the last decade of touring to really sit down and think about band life, or my life before the band. Bar any drastic change in the laws of physics and the way we perceive time, it continues to march on with or without us. I find it hard to get all wrapped up in nostalgia, mainly just because our focus is always six months to a year ahead. So when I realised that not only was this past September going to be my 10th year in Trivium, but also my 10-year reunion for high school, I felt I owed it to myself to take a breather and appreciate my life. I remember being posted in the van at some dingy rest stop parking lot, off of a random highway up in the northeast of the US. It was after midnight and we were trying to catch some shuteye before finishing up a long drive to the next show. Being cold is what I remember most from those early tours. It seemed like an endless winter, even though it was only about four or five months. This was pre-*Ascendancy* (or if you prefer, How Did This Shit Happen So Fast?) Trivium. Although I wouldn't want to get back into a van nowadays, eespecially the seedy one that we had, I do have a fondness for that short time as a completely unknown opening band. Seeing the country like that was an unforgettable experience: the freedom from school and the chance to live out a dream I had, no matter how long it lasted, was a pretty exhilarating feeling. More on this next month...

www.trivium.org



© Scott Uchida

THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike asks how we can contribute

Following on from my musical multitasking column last month, it's obvious these days that what happens offstage away from the music can be make a big difference to your band's success. Once the music stops, let's not get lazy – let's try and use your other creative talents to befit your band's career. Pretty much everyone can get access to cheap technology, so make sure your website and social media networks look great and up-to-date. There's a plethora of affordable gear and powerful software out there, so if you have a good ear for tones and a working knowledge of sound, get a basic recording setup for doing cheap demos and recording shows. Get involved with the photography and video aspect of the band: there's no excuse for sloppy promo shots or dodgy videos. Make sure you document all your studio sessions and get in the habit of making 'making of' or tour documentaries. Likewise, get designing killer merchandise. I'm always amazed how many bands have really cheap looking T-shirts in uninspiring colours. People are more inclined to spend money on a decent shirt than a CD these days, so make sure your shirts stand out. If the designs are strong enough then look at moving them into the artwork and flyer side of the band. If you can rustle up a distinctive design or logo that's instantly recognisable that image will serve your band well – think Motörhead's Snaggletooth or Metallica's Scary Guy. If you're not computer literate don't worry: get out there and chat to people face to face, that's how you'll build proper relationships with fans. If you're not a talker but more of a doer, look after the gear, tech for other bands and learn those skills: your bandmates will never have to rely on the guy up the road for a £30 set-up again. There's probably a column (or chapter) on each of the above additional band duties you can take on, so I haven't gone into great depth on any of them here. Just regard them as food for thought: make the most of your talents and be sure to make your mark on stage and off.

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Ten-string tweaker Stew continues his bass survey...

Roberto Vally is a session player and sideman who has played with artists as diverse as Lindsay Lohan and Patti Austin, Spyro Gyra and Bobby Caldwell. When I first heard him he had taken the melodic groove approach that Jimmy Haslip had been using in fusion music, and was doing wild things in a pop-funk band that was playing in the tiny town in Florida where we lived. His talent and drive have launched him into a career that continues to inspire and has allowed him to release his first solo album, *Boom Boom Boom*.

When I saw his band – with no guitarist and a lunatic bassist playing chordal passages, slapping and playing terrifying ostinato lines even as he was singing and dancing – I knew I had a lot to learn about what I was doing and about what I wanted to do. This was the first player whose tone, taste and time showed me a completely realised concept. Not surprisingly, when I gave Roberto the questionnaire I mentioned last month, his responses came back to practicality, musicality and the ongoing pursuit of improvement both as an artist and as a craftsman. Because he has always been a working player, a lot of his responses came down to flexibility. 'I believe my strength as a bassist is my versatility, the ability to change and blend my styles to fit the artist and the song I'm about to perform or record' he said, adding 'I look up to players that have a lot of versatility and know just the right note to play, and where and how.' Many of his responses were about the nuts and bolts of being a bass player, of being prepared, of learning how to play with a drummer and how to create an organic environment in the studio and about giving up ego to make music the priority. This is why my 'big bass brother' continues to be a hero: he never loses sight of what's important.

www.facebook.com + search 'Stewart McKinsey'

BASS TECHNIQUES

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

Ellen O'Reilly is a freelance bassist and vocalist currently studying at ICMP. Ellen has extensive experience in gigging, studio and television work.
www.lowendlady.com

ELLEN O'REILLY BEGINNER'S THEORY 63

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES 66

Alex Webster founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and has guested since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the Extreme Metal Bass instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY 68

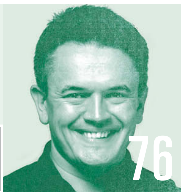
Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES 70

Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com

FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY 74

Say hello to advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...

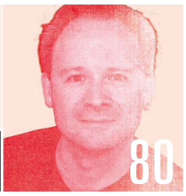


PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES 76

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS 78

Mike has written for *BGM* since 2004 and has been a bassist since 1987, clocking up over 3000 gigs around the world in the process. He has played for and worked with the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Toyah Willcox, and has a bass collection to rival a small shop.



MIKE BROOKS COVER BAND PRO 80

Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist, with 15 years of touring and 36 solo and collaborative albums to his name. He also lectures at colleges around the world.
www.stevelawson.net.

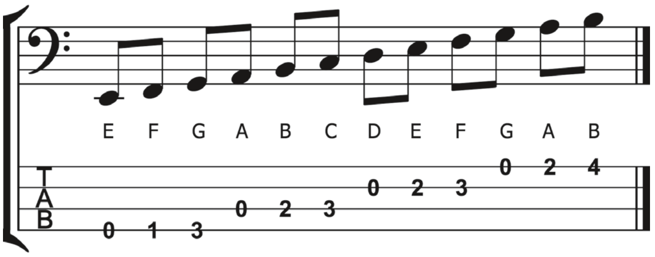
STEVE LAWSON EFFECTS MAESTRO 81

BGM Notation Legend

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO THE NOTATION SYMBOLS AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

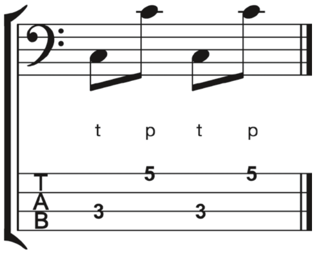
The Stave: most music written for the bass guitar uses the bass clef. The example to the right shows the placement of the notes on the stave.

Tablature: this is a graphical representation of the music. Each horizontal line corresponds with a string on the bass guitar, with the lowest line representing the lowest pitched string (E). The numbers represent the frets to be played. Numbers stacked vertically indicate notes that are played together. Where basses with five or six strings are required, the tablature stave will have five or six lines as necessary.



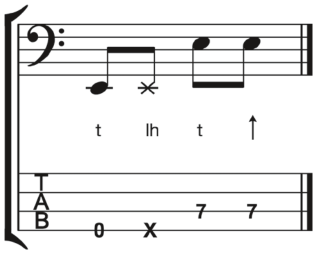
Notes shown in brackets indicate that a note has been tied over from a previous bar.

PLAYING TECHNIQUES



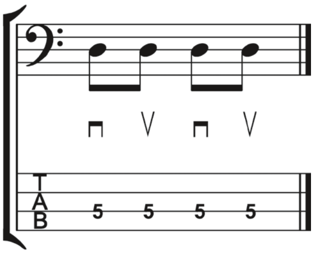
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

Notes slapped with the thumb are marked with a 't', notes popped with the fingers marked with a 'p'



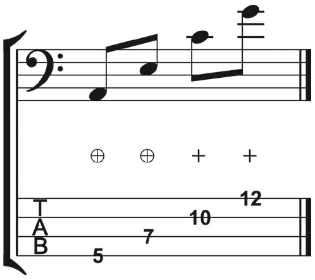
ADVANCED SLAP TECHNIQUE

Fretting hand slaps are marked 'lh' and double thumbing upstrokes are shown with an upward pointing arrow



PLECTRUM TECHNIQUE

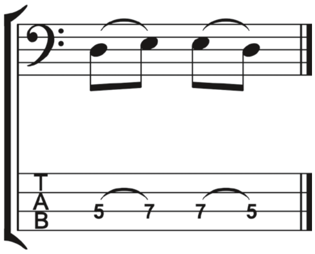
Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up)



TAPPING TECHNIQUES

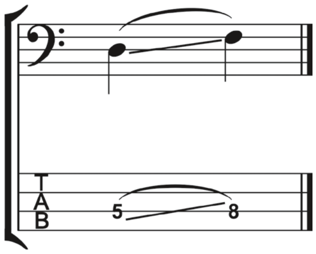
Fretting hand taps are shown with a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are shown with '+'. Specific fingers will be shown with numbers if necessary

FRETTING TECHNIQUES



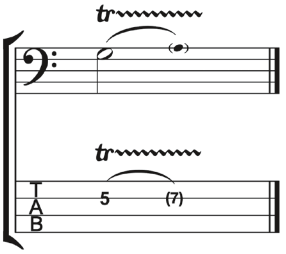
HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF

Hammer-ons and pull-offs are shown with a slur over the notes. Only the first note is plucked by the picking hand



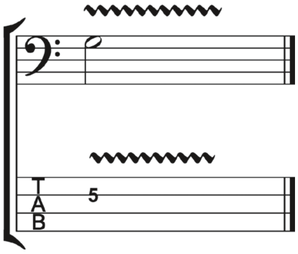
SLIDE (GLISSANDO)

Slides are performed by playing the first note then sliding the fretting finger up to the second note



TRILLS

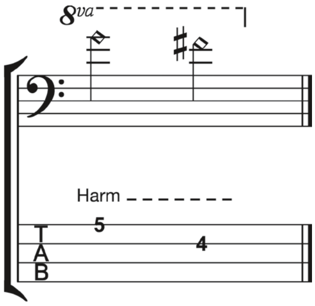
Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown using hammer-ons and pull-offs



VIBRATO

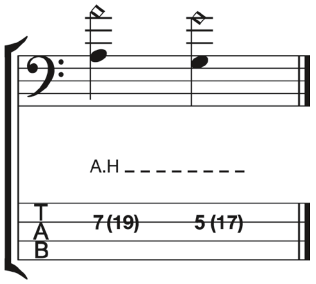
The pitch of the note is altered by repeatedly bending the string up and back with the fretting finger

PLAYING HARMONICS



NATURAL HARMONICS

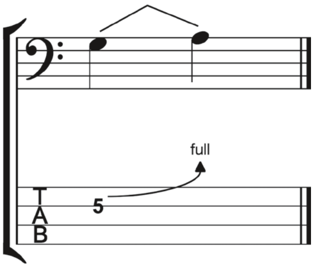
The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated



ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

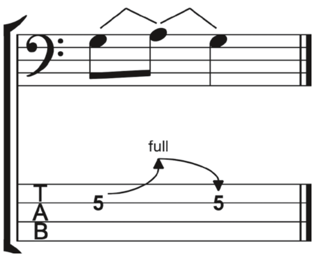
Pluck the string while fretting the lower note and placing the edge of the picking hand thumb an octave higher (the note shown in brackets)

BENDING NOTES



BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: ½ = semitone, full = tone



BEND AND RELEASE

The note is bent up to the interval indicated then released back to its original pitch

ELLEN O'REILLY

ELLEN FINISHES UP HER EXPLORATION OF CHORD EXTENSIONS FOR BEGINNERS

Hello again bass buddies! Over the last few months we have been getting acquainted with the fretboard by getting to know the note names all over the neck. We've built up our knowledge of chords and their extensions and we have also looked at the major and minor scales. This month I want to take us back to the scales – but this time we will look at their alter-egos, the modes.

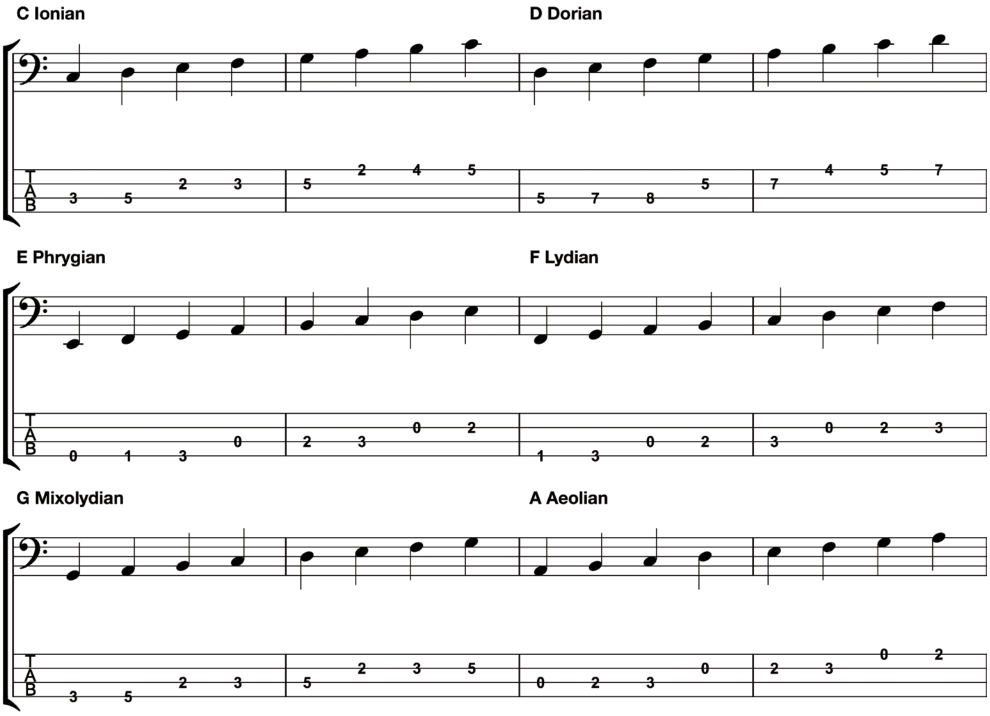
I remember being blown away years ago by a bassist who took a solo at a gig and wondering how he played so melodically without hitting bum notes, so I went up and asked him. All he said was 'Learn your modes!' That was the beginning of me trying to come to grips with a concept that, if inadequately explained, can leave you incredibly confused. I remember being so lost trying to find books, people and resources on the web to help me understand it – but to no avail, until I set foot into the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance. With the next few columns I want to share what I learned about modes there.

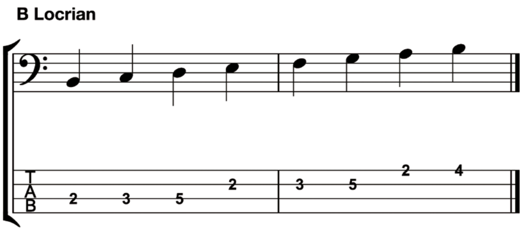
First of all, you have already learned two of the modes. The major scale is also known as the Ionian mode and the (natural) minor scale is also known as the Aoelian mode. There are seven modes in major harmony: they correspond with the seven degrees of the major scale and chords as follows:

Degree of major scale	Chord of harmonised major scale	Mode
1st degree	major7	Ionian (major)
2nd degree	minor7	Dorian
3rd degree	minor7	Phrygian
4th degree	major7	Lydian
5th degree	dominant7	Mixolydian
6th degree	minor7	Aoelian (minor)
7th degree	minor7b5	Locrian

Simply put, modes are just a way of playing a scale in a particular key, starting on a different degree of that scale. For example, if you're in the key of C major and you play C to C, then you are playing the Ionian mode, but if you play D to D, then you are playing the Dorian mode. See **Example 1.**

Key of C major
Starting on 1st degree C D E F G A B C
Starting on 2nd degree D E F G A B C D
Starting on 3rd degree E F G A B C D E
Starting on 4th degree F G A B C D E F
Starting on 5th degree G A B C D E F G
Starting on 6th degree A B C D E F G A
Starting on 7th degree B C D E F G A B





Over the next few lessons we will look at each mode in more detail and learn how to apply them to your playing. Onwards and upwards.

PAUL GEARY

THIS MONTH PAUL EXAMINES CHORDS IN THE HIGHER REGISTER

Let's take a look at comping some bass chords. This month I would like to explore some simple chord shapes on the bass above the 12th fret – the dusty bit of the neck!

It is always an inspiration to me to see exactly what the bass guitar is capable of. Its function will always be fundamental to the rhythm section. However, there is nothing stopping it being as melodic and harmonic as any other instrument. If our understanding and knowledge of a chord stops at knowing the root, we are limiting our own growth on the instrument and missing out on some great playing possibilities, as well as the construction of great bass-lines.

EXAMPLE 1

Remember that all of these examples are to be played above the 12th fret. I have written the chord stacks on the stave down the octave rather than on ledger lines, purely for ease of reading. The symbol 8va tells us to play the notes up the octave. This is indicated on the tablature.

The first chord can be played over a G minor seventh. We start with the root of G (15th fret E string) followed by the minor seventh interval played on F (15th fret D string) and finally the minor 3rd interval Bb (15th fret G string). Try playing the chord with the thumb of the plucking hand striking the E string, and then your first and second fingers playing the D and G strings simultaneously. Your fretting hand fingers will need to hold down the notes of the chord at the same time. The first finger holds down G, the second finger is on the F, which is followed by the third finger on the Bb.

EXAMPLE 2

In this next example we move onto a C dominant seventh chord. As above we start with the root of C on the 15th fret of the A string, but this time play the major third interval E on the 14th fret of the D string. The minor seventh Bb is played on the 15th fret of the G string. It is a different inversion and shape to the last example, but sounds brighter because the root is played on the A string. Keep the fretting hand and plucking hand fingers the same as the last example, making sure all the notes are played at the same time.

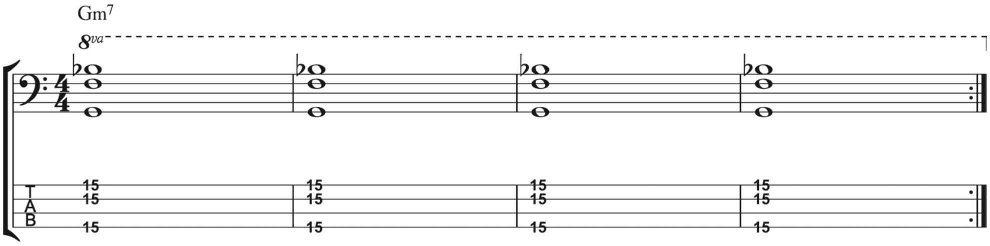
Use the second finger of your fretting hand to play the root of C, followed by your first finger playing E and finally your third finger playing the Bb.

EXAMPLES 3 AND 4

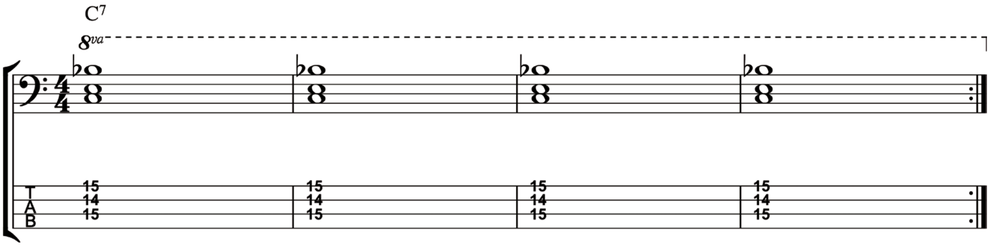
Let's move the root of the next two chords around and play Fmi7 and Bb7. Keep the shapes exactly the same as the previous two examples, with your fretting hand in the same position. Try playing the chord shapes with the first finger of your plucking hand striking the root, then moving quickly to play the next two notes of the chord with the same two fingers.

Stick with it and the effort you put in will pay off. Next month we will put these chord shapes to work in a progression. Good luck!

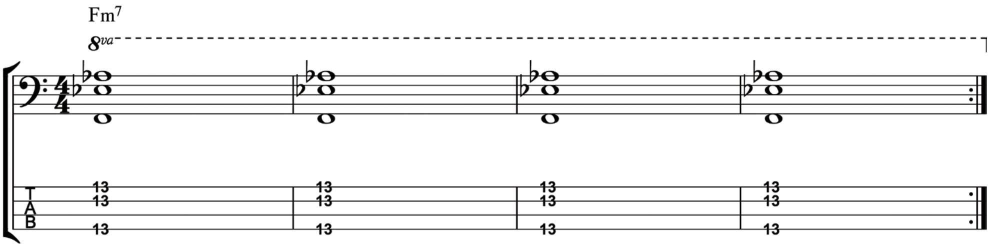
Example 1



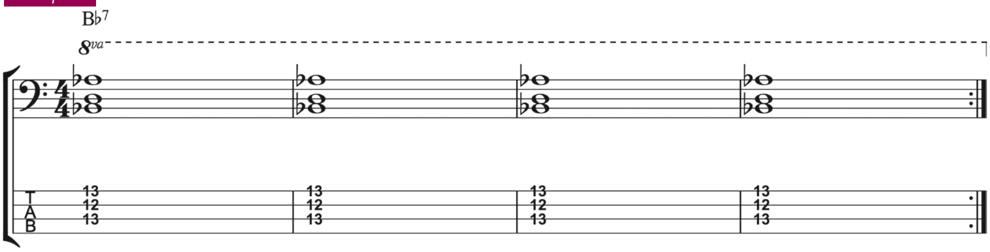
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



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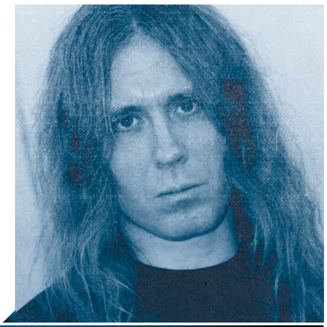


ALEX WEBSTER

PROF WEBSTER EXPLORES ACCENTS IN EIGHTH-NOTE GROUPINGS

This month we're going to shift gears a bit from the scale-focused columns of the past year or so and start looking at rhythm and meter. We'll get things started by looking at 8th note groupings in one of the most common time signatures: 4/4. As you work through these examples, first try them without a click or metronome – just tap your foot: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Once you feel comfortable with the exercises then try them with a click as well, at various tempos.

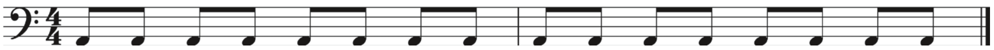
I've decided not to bother with tab this time, since the exercises are only working with one note: A. Rhythm's the important thing this time so you can really do these exercises with any pitch you like. You're all probably familiar and very comfortable with the 8th note pulse shown in **Example 1**. It's straightforward, and can easily be counted the standard way: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and so on. This sort of line is probably one of the first things you would have learned as a bassist.

Example 2 shows how things can get interesting by playing the same line, but with accents in different places. The 8th notes are grouped 3, 3, 2, rather than 2, 2, 2, 2 as in **Example 1**. I think you'll find this to be a familiar pattern as well. As you play through the second two bars of the example, keep that 3, 3, 2 pulse in your head: it makes it easy to sustain the quarter and dotted quarter notes for the correct length of time. The final bars of the example only play the accented 8th notes of the pattern rather than sustaining the note. Again, keeping the basic 3, 3, 2 pulse in your head makes this easy to play.

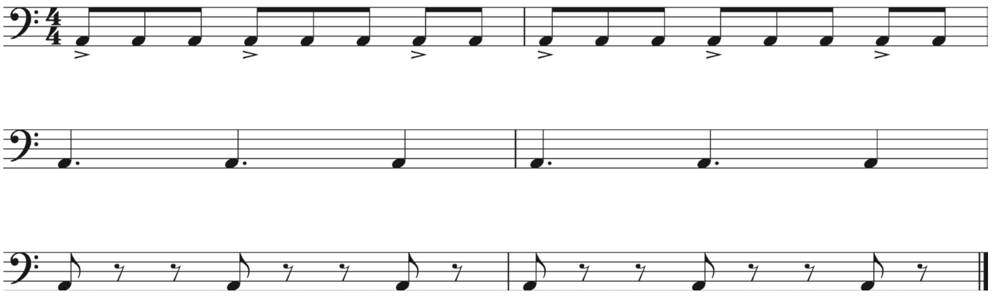
Examples 3 and 4 look at two other 8th note groupings within 4/4: 2, 3, 3 and 3, 2, 3. These two are a bit less common than 3, 3, 2. Play through them, keeping the same things in mind mentioned above.

If you haven't experimented with different note groupings before, I think you'll find these exercises pretty eye opening. They show that even the simplest pattern can be made interesting by changing which notes are accented. Next month we'll go further with this concept and take a look at more note groupings and meters.

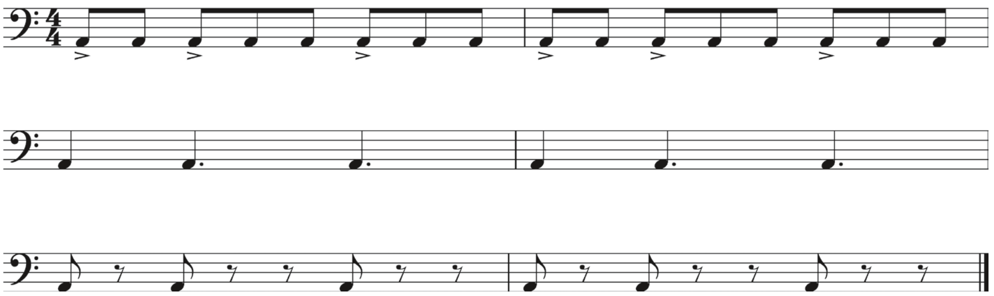
Example 1



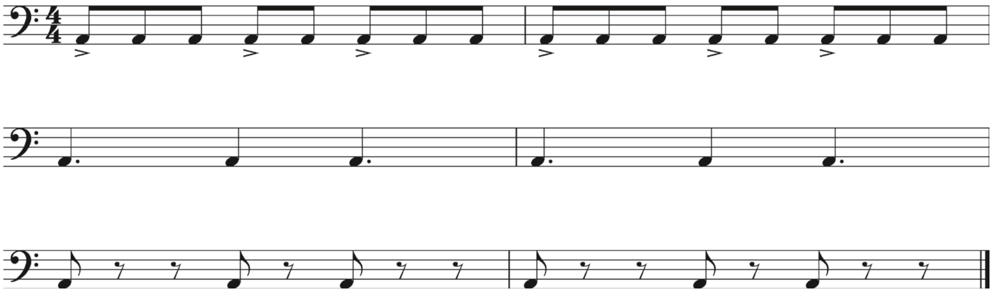
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



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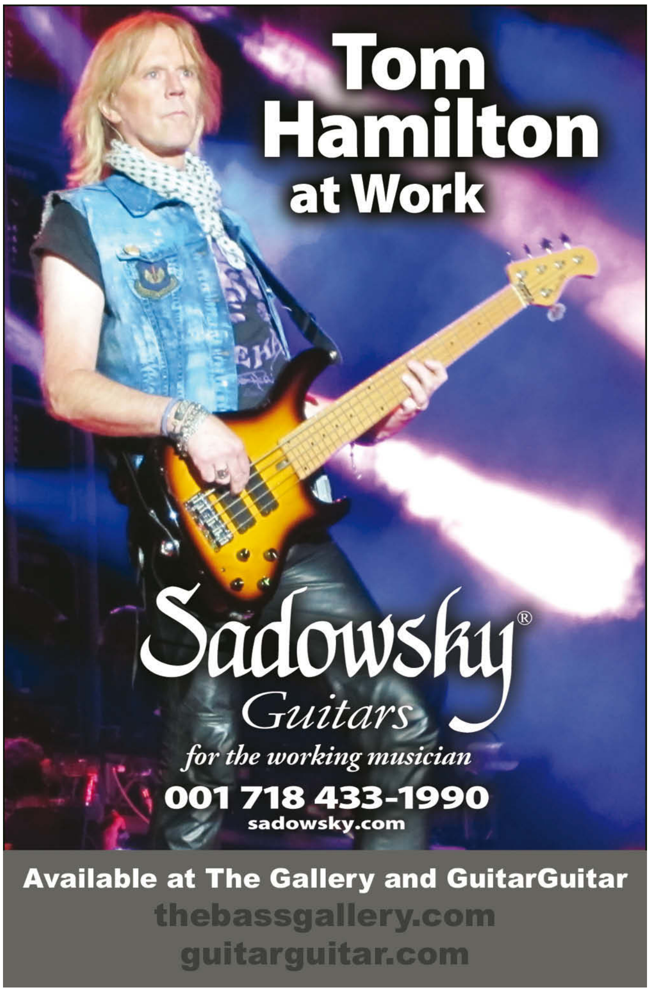
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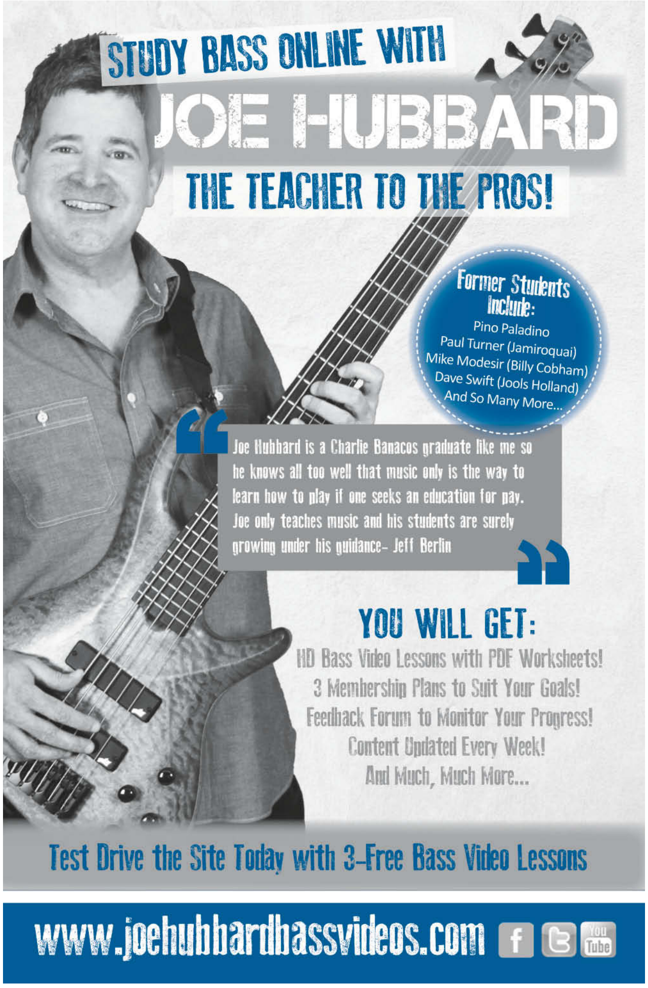
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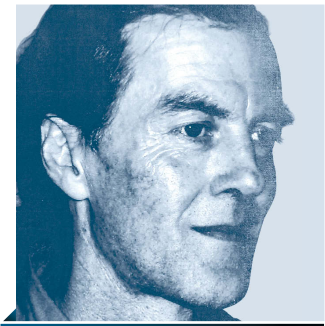


ROB STATHAM

ROB STATHAM LOOKS AT THE PLUCKING HAND FOR INSPIRATION

We recently looked at some technique-building exercises for our fretting hand, and so I thought it might be a good idea to check out some exercises directed at our plucking hand. There are, of course, many methods on the bass guitar for hitting the strings – fingerstyle, pick, slap, tap – and many variations within each of those methods, but we shall concentrate here on what is normally regarded as the default fingerstyle technique, that is plucking the strings with the first two fingers.

This default fingerstyle technique is typically described as an alternating action, though there is the possibility of raking on descending lines, and in a previous column I advised being familiar with and in control of either option. In reality, I find that many students tend to be a little random in this regard, sometimes alternating, sometimes raking, but, crucially, not always being aware of which technique they are using at any given time, leaving it instead to chance. I also sometimes observe students using the same finger to play successive notes, even on the same string: this is usually indicative of a lack of conscious control of the plucking hand.

Exercise 1 is a common pattern with the root, 5th and octave played as 5th-octave-5th-root to make a group of four. It's a simple enough idea, yet because it is played across three strings it present string-crossing issues, and the question of whether to alternate or rake is apparent. I have provided four ways to play the descending notes across the strings in this pattern: firstly, strictly alternating; secondly, raking on the descent; and finally two combination approaches. The aim here is to be exhaustive with the possibilities and to develop an awareness of how each feels, while at the same time ensuring that the figure is equally clear and well articulated, whichever approach we are using.

You will notice with the two combination approaches that the leading finger changes from one group of four to the next. It is often when playing bass-lines which, when repeated, start with the other finger that we sometimes get in a tangle. There is no plucking hand system that can insure against this in all situations as it depends on, among other things, the number of notes in the bass-line – if it is an odd number followed by even, if we are strictly alternating, the leading finger will change.

For this reason, and to be truly exhaustive, it is worth practising all of these types of exercises leading with either finger, first or second. In my experience, most of us have a finger we favour leading with – usually but not always the first finger – but anything we play is contingent on what we have just played immediately before, and so we need to be able to lead with either finger as required.

Exercises 2 and 3 take this idea of the leading finger changing, first in duple form and then in triplet form, and it is instructive to note the different implications each have for our plucking-hand fingering depending on whether we alternate or rake. The pattern is a two-bar A minor pentatonic idea played in repeated 16th notes which uses all four strings and crosses back and forth as the line ascends. Both exercises need to be played with two approaches: strictly alternating all the way, and then raking when descending across strings. To be thorough you should then repeat that, but starting by leading off with the second rather than first finger.

In **Exercise 1** an alternating approach will remain constant, ascending and descending across strings, as the note groupings played on each string are an even number. However, if we rake when descending, then the leading finger will change, as I have indicated in the second half of each bar where this occurs. You will notice that because we descend across two strings during those two beats, then the leading finger changes from the first to the second and then back again, meaning that as we continue the line at the start of the next bar we are back where we started, alternating and leading with the first finger (assuming we started on the first finger initially as in the notated example, but don't forget to play the exercise starting with the second finger too).

The second version of this exercise uses the same pentatonic idea, but now we are playing groups of three 16th note triplets for each note. This has the effect of creating a combination of odd and even numbers of notes played on each string, either six or three notes, which has implications for the leading finger as we descend across strings even if alternating. Notice that, as indicated, when alternating, the leading finger changes if we have just played an odd number of notes on the string we are descending from. Thus, having started the exercise leading with the first finger, as indicated, this changes to the second finger on the second half of the third beat, and back again at the start of the second bar, having just played an odd number of notes on the E string. Conversely, when we rake, the leading finger

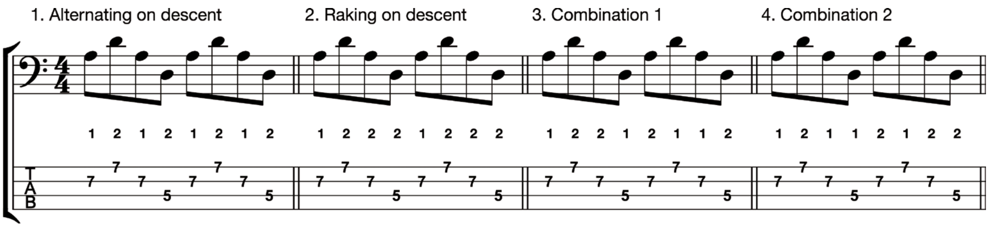
remains the same after playing the three notes on the D string at the start of beat three, but changes on the second half of beat four, having just played six notes on the A string. It changes back again as we resume an alternating pattern at the start of the second bar.

We can derive a general principle here. When descending across strings, an odd number of notes played prior to crossing yields a change of leading finger if alternating, but the same leading finger if raking. An even number of notes gives us the same leading finger if alternating, and a change of leading finger if raking.

Exercise 4 is a two-bar G minor pentatonic figure with some chromaticism that crosses all four strings, combining odd and even numbers of notes on different strings. The eighth notes are to be played with a swing feel, and I have indicated which will be the leading finger at each string crossing. I have written it as a four-bar figure, so the two bar figure repeated, and then the whole four bars is repeated. Thus we are playing the two bar figure four times and, if we alternate when descending on the first two bars and rake when descending on the second two bars as indicated, then when we repeat the four bars we should be leading with the second finger rather than the first. After playing the repeat of the four bars, we will have covered all possibilities. Play through this slowly at first, ensuring that each time you cross a string you are using the leading finger as indicated, and noting how the leading finger changes from the first to the second when we repeat the four bars.

You can analyse any bass-lines you know in this manner, considering the options with regard to alternating and raking and the implications for the leading finger. This all helps us to have greater control over our plucking hand articulation, rather than leaving it to chance.

Example 1



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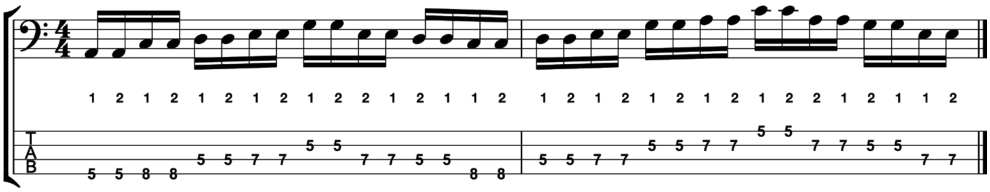

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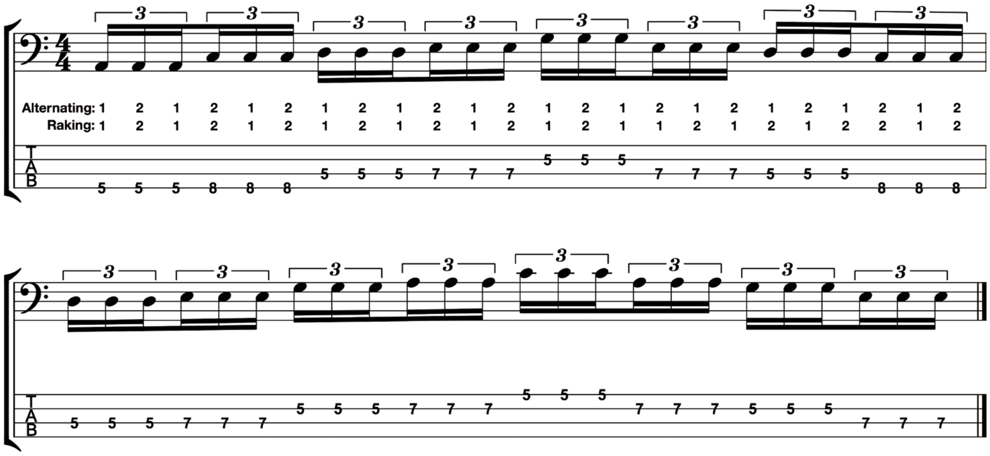

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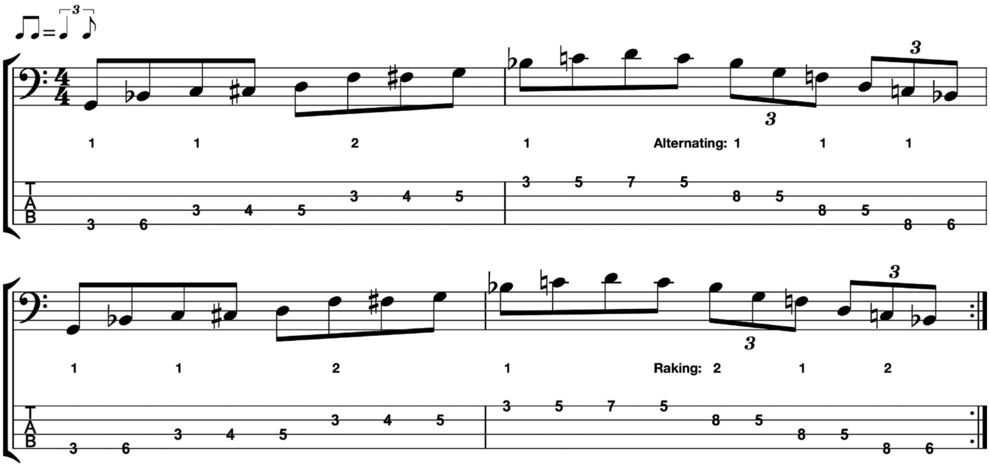

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FRANC O'SHEA

THIS MONTH, FRANC TAKES ROCK SOLOING TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

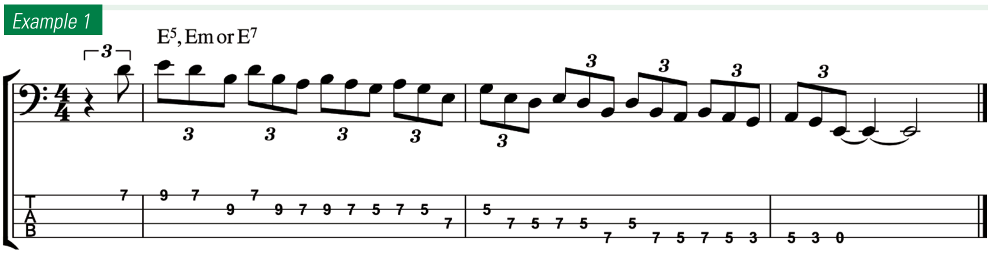
In this month's column I will be continuing to look at creating rock bass solos by focusing on patterns and ideas that are common to the genre.

In **Example 1**, a repeating descending pattern is used on two octaves of an E minor pentatonic scale. This common pattern is demonstrated using a triplet rhythmic pattern, which gives a feeling of a shuffle or a 12/8 compound time signature reminiscent of many blues tunes. However, this type of rhythmic feel could quite easily be placed over a straight 8th-note rock rhythm too, to add excitement during a solo.

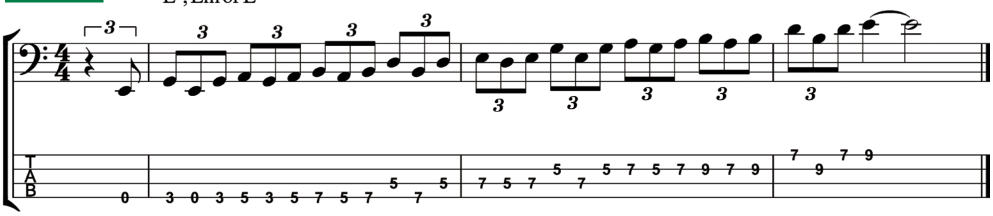
You will notice that the pattern systematically descends by employing groups of three notes taken directly from the scale, highlighted in each triplet group. The pattern starts with an anacrusis (a rhythm pickup) on the final triplet quaver of the fourth beat of the first bar. This is the flattened 7th of the scale, D, which creates a lead into the root note, E, on the first beat of the second bar. This high E is followed by the note D in the scale and then the perfect 5th (B) – completing one pattern. The next pattern group follows the same form only it starts from D and descends in sequence down three notes of the scale. The pattern continues like this all the way down to the open E string, firing off three descending notes from each consecutive scale degree as it gradually moves down the scale.

A good example of this pattern in action is the Stevie Wonder classic 'Master Blaster'. In an extended run

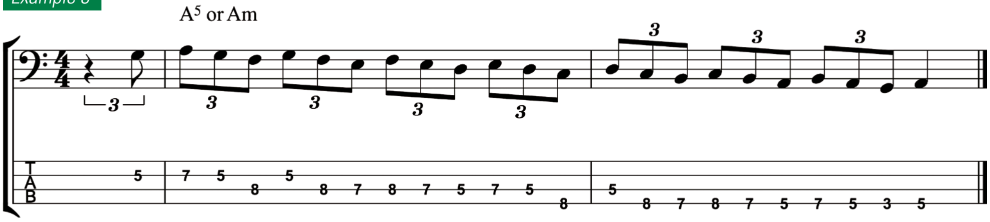
Example 1



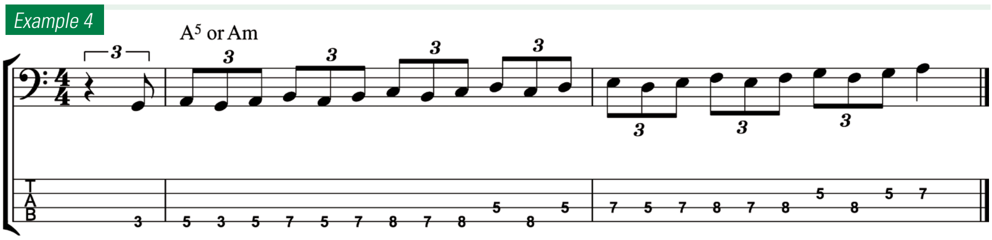
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



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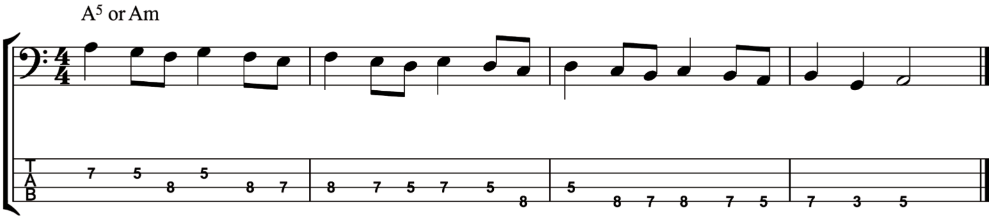
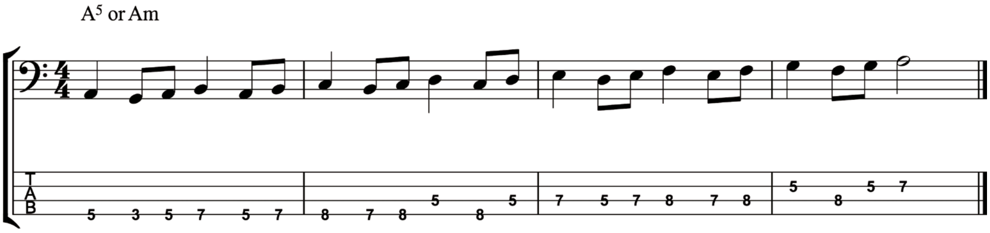


Example 6



that comes in at around 2:55, a similar pattern can be clearly heard that is based on a C minor pentatonic scale.

Example 2 is similar to the first, but an ascending version of the pattern is demonstrated. This example is also based on two octaves of the E minor pentatonic scale. You will note that the groups of progressively ascending notes are displaced rhythmically by a quaver triplet, as this sounds better when ascending, creating a sound where each triplet group twists back on itself before moving on to the next group.

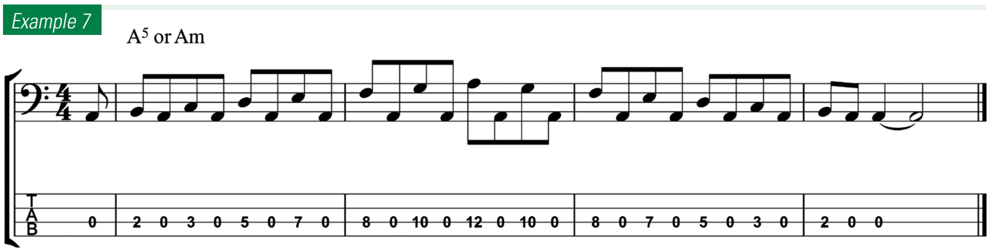
Example 3 demonstrates that this idea is not only limited to pentatonic scales and shows the pattern used on an A natural minor scale (which is also known as the Aeolian mode). Since the Aeolian mode is a heptatonic scale (seven notes) it takes longer for the pattern to reach its conclusion than when used with a pentatonic scale, as pentatonics only have five notes.

Example 4 is the reverse of **Example 3** and shows the same pattern on the same scale, ascending rather than descending. You may notice that ascending and descending patterns tend to create different emotional responses in the listener. Descending patterns create less excitement – which is what you may want at that point in your solo – creating a 'coming down to earth' or 'grounding' effect, whereas ascending patterns tend to generate excitement giving the feeling that the listener is being drawn upwards with the soloist.

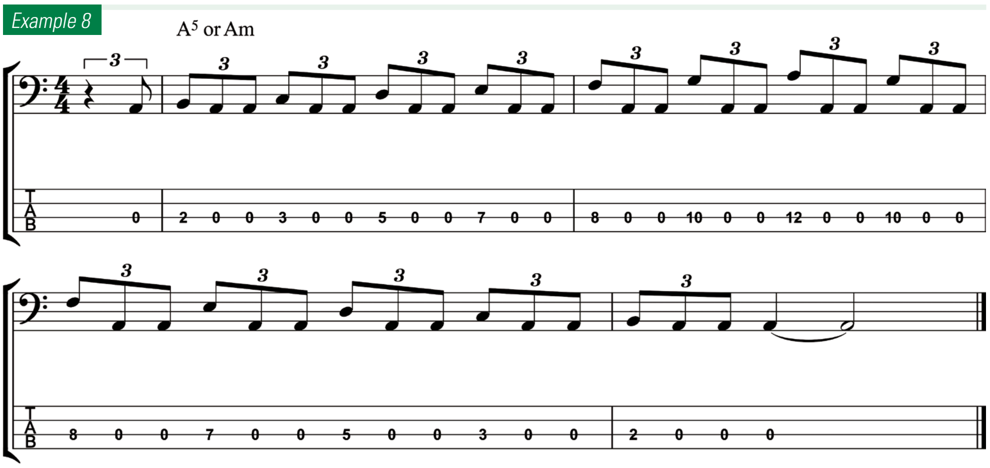
Example 5 adds a new twist to the same pattern idea by moving away from the use of triplets. Here we see that successive crotchets and quavers are employed, stretching the pattern out and causing its conclusion to be delayed even further. The pattern now sounds far more regal and less bluesy: coupled with the Aeolian mode, a medieval sound is created that wouldn't sound out of place on an early Rush album.

Example 6 follows the same pattern that once again appears on an A Aeolian mode, however, it is now demonstrated in retrograde.

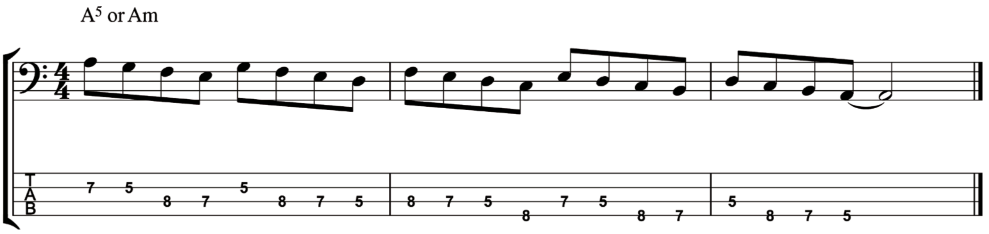
Example 7



Example 8



Example 9



You will note that the tab for **Example 7** shows that this idea is executed on only one string, the A string. This example also employs an A Aeolian mode, but is an entirely new idea. The open A string creates a repeating pedal, as fretted notes interspersed between the A notes gradually ascend and descend. This creates a driving feel and has been employed to great effect in various rock tunes. The driving riff from 'Peter Gunn' is a classic example, as is 'Dead Loss Angeles' by the Stranglers. In fact, the Stranglers' Jean Jacques Burnel can be heard using a combination of fretted notes and the open G string in the fast and furious flurry that opens their hit 'No More Heroes' from 1979.

Example 8 takes the idea presented in **Example 7** further by employing a triplet rhythm and using a single fretted note at the beginning of each triplet group, followed by two open A string notes. The same rhythmic idea could be used with normal 8th notes to create an accent-shifting effect by highlighting groups of three notes rather than the usual groups of fours.

The final example, **Example 9**, demonstrates another common pattern that is shown here in its descending form. The overall pattern descends down each scale in tetrachords from the octave A until it finally reaches the low A at the fifth fret of the E string. You could also use the same idea to ascend the scale by playing ascending tetrachords from each scale degree. A good example of this pattern is used for one of the main riffs in Rush's 10-minute opus 'Xanadu' from their *A Farewell To Kings* album. They use a brief tetrachord-based tag at the end of every riff cycle, which initially kicks in at 2:51. At 3:54 they go to town with the idea and use a prolonged series of descending tetrachords before breaking down into the next section of the song, creating a grand ending to that particular section.

Next month I will be looking at some more ideas that you will find helpful as a springboard for coming up with your own rock-based solos. Until then...

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PHIL MANN

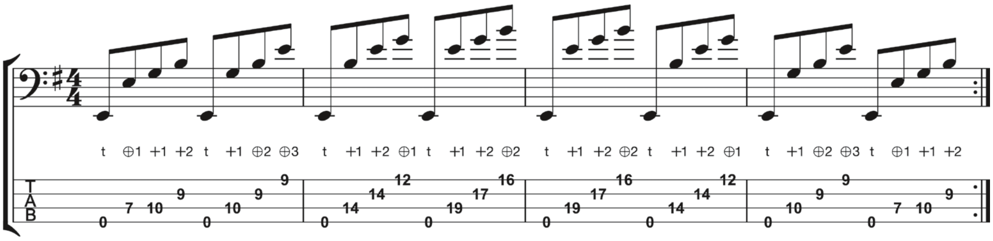
IT'S TIME TO GET THOSE FINGERS IN SHAPE, DECLARES TECHNIQUE MAESTRO MANN

Time after time I've encountered students from all ages and abilities missing a vital component in their skill sets: transposition. What if you were required to perform a phrase or skill outside of your comfort zone? I see musicians from all instrument types, genres and technique levels fall by the wayside when confronted with what seems to be the most simple question: 'Can you play that same thing you just did, but in the key of Gm instead of Em?' The look on most players' faces is priceless – like you've just stolen their instruments out of their hands and burned them with echoes of Jimi Hendrix at Monterey in 1967.

Taking the time to master an exercise in all 12 keys helps ensure that you develop the ability to cope not only with the limitations that you may encounter from your instrument, but also the limitations that you may have with your skills. After all, not all slap bass is in E minor, so how would you cope if you were required to perform in a key centre that removed your ability to use open strings? Now, if you'll allow me a moment to get down off of my soapbox, we can look at the content of this month's advanced techniques.

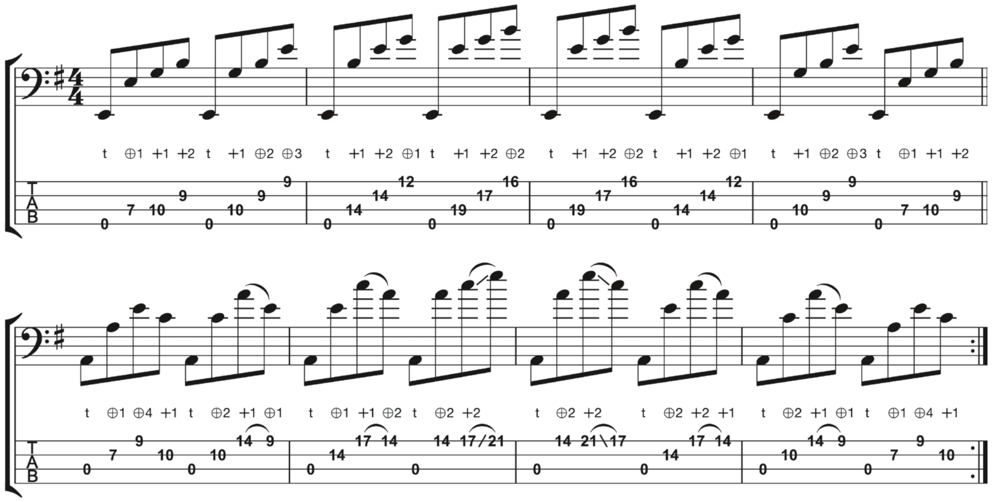
Stu Hamm's been in London this past month and his presence has inspired me to revisit a classic tune taken from his debut solo album, *Radio Free Albemuth*. **Example 1** commences this month's study by investigating some ideas inspired by Hamm's playing on 'Flow My Tears', where the low E string is struck with your thumb and then the other notes envelop it in a tapped manner.

Example1



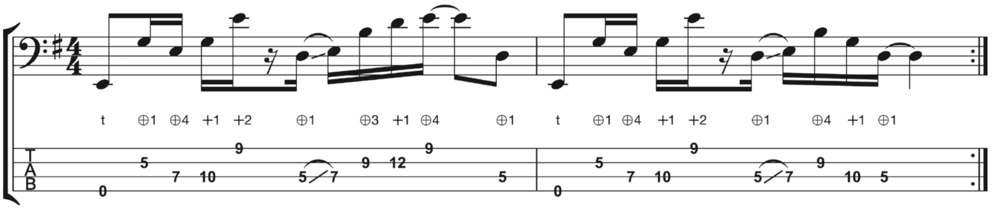
Example 2 takes our already established principles and moves them between two chord structures a perfect fourth apart: Em and Am. For those of you not using a 24-fretted instrument, you may recall my opening paragraph... It's time to transpose them into a more suitable register.

Example 2



Example 3 is the first figure of this month's work that has an ostinato feel to it, meaning that it is a piece of music that continues to repeat to create a groove. The bulk of the idea is produced using our old friend the minor triad, but you'll have to also deal with some sliding movements and that all-important slapped open E string. Once mastered, try and perform this with some form of accompaniment to get the full effect.

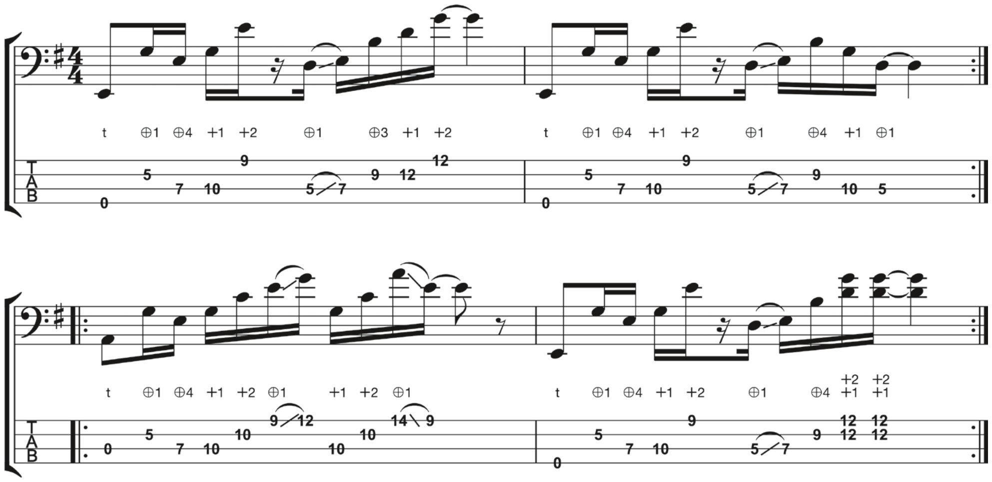
Example 3



Example 4

Our final exercise expands the ideas crafted in **Example 3**, once again with the idea moving between two chord structures as in **Example 2**. The piece has also developed melodically with the introduction of a double stop at the end of the line, as well as a cool little movement in bar 3.

Once you are proficient in the suggested keys, take all of the ideas in this month's column and attempt to transpose them, perhaps into a host of 'fretted' key centres (such as G or F) where the low open string is absent. It's a vital skill to master and will serve you long into your future careers. Next month we step it up another gear – until then, practise hard!



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DAVID ETHERIDGE

DOUBLE BASS MAESTRO DAVID ETHERIDGE LOOKS AT CHORD CONSTRUCTION

Many written jazz parts for bass players leave a lot to the player's imagination and creativity. In big band parts, you may have a totally written out part, just chord symbols, or any combination of the two. Some of the famous Hal Leonard libraries of big band material have parts that are written out, but also have chord charts as well, the inference being that you play the written part if you can't think of how to busk over the chords. Mind you, if you listen to the recordings of the material you'll find that the rhythm section are having terrific fun, and what they're playing bears only the slightest relationship to the printed parts. Let's look at the notes that comprise chords. This gives us the raw material to assemble parts that outline the harmonic structure of the tunes that we play.

Example 1 shows basic major chords in C: C major, Cmaj7, C7, C6 and C7b5. Remember that you don't have to play them as written: arpeggios can go up or down in direction, and depending on context, a section could start on any note of the chord itself.

Note the last example: terrific for passing chords (to F here), this chord also works in two different keys at the same time if you change the inversion. If you change the Gb and Bb to F# and A#, you have F#7b5.

Example 2 shows minor chords in C: C min, Cmin+7, Cm7, Cm6 and Cm7b5. Notice that the second chord is minor but with a major 7th: this has a sound and effect all of its own. You may be asking whether you can have a Cmb6: the answer is no, because the ear will hear that as an Ab chord with C in the bass. Cm7b5 is another passing chord, but it also works again by changing the inversion, and can become Ebm6. Looking for these connections shows you how chords interrelate in the most magical way.

Example 3 extends the chords to 9ths in C: Cmaj9, C9 (with the flattened 7th), C+9, and C7b9. These are fairly straightforward, although the C+9 is interesting: the top note is regarded as a raised 9th (D#) rather than a flattened 10th/3rd (Eb), and it's the tension between the E (3rd) and D# (9th) that gives it its sound. If you want to hear the full chord on guitar, vintage fans will find it as the first chord on Cream's classic track 'I Feel Free', although the chord there is E+9 (easy for guitarists). The last chord here is C7b9b5, and you'll probably only find this kind of chord in fusion and more harmonically advanced jazz. Once again, it's an extended version of a C7b5 chord.

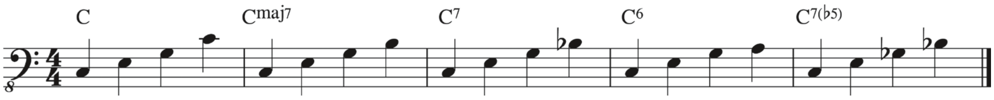
With minor 9ths, things get even more interesting. **Example 4** shows Cm9+7, Cm9, Cm7b9, and Cm7b9b5, which can be interesting harmonically.

Now don't worry about trying to cram all the degrees of the chord into your bass parts; most of the time it'll be impossible, except in a fill or a run. Let the chordal instruments put in the upper tones, and concentrate on the root, 3rd and 5th of the chord, flattened where necessary.

Example 5 shows diminished chords, which are incredibly useful for getting from one seemingly unrelated chord to another. I've given the three examples here: as diminished chords are a minor 3rd apart, exactly the same notes occur in each group. C, Eb, F# and A dim have the same notes, and so on with the other two groups.

So how do you know which dim chord is being described? By the bass note. This can be useful to know, as arrangers who aren't up to speed with bass (and dim chords for that matter) can sometimes put the wrong note as the bass note. An example: a chord sequence may be written C-Edim-Dm7. Change that to its correct form of C-C#dim-Dm7, and it all becomes clear and sounds much smoother. These errors can turn up far more often than you might think!

Example 1



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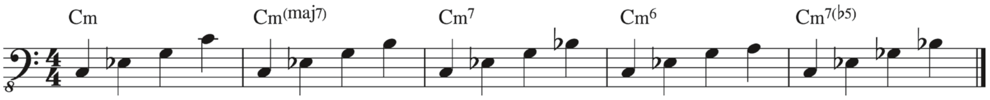
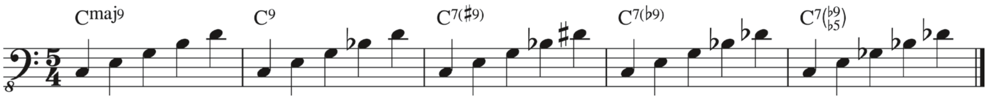


Example 3



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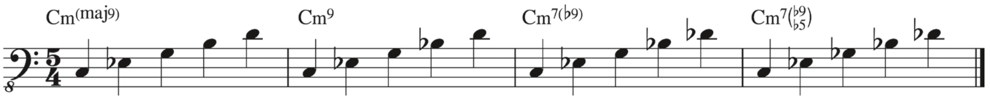

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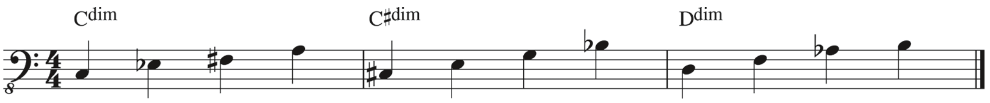

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MIKE BROOKS

THIS MONTH MIKE ADVISES BASSISTS ABOUT THE BUSINESS BEHIND A COVERS BAND

Howdy bass dudes and dudettes! Playing in a covers band won't make you a millionaire overnight but if you address the basics from the start, it is possible to turn it from a weekly bit of fun into a full time job, albeit requiring time, patience and hard graft – not to mention some luck along the way.

Making your covers band your main income stream can be a daunting prospect, and if you're used to a regular wage, the early stages can be testing. You can have a day job as well, but it restricts your ability to chase gigs, take bookings, organise the band and be available for gigs around the country, especially for an early setup. If you go for it, be prepared for long days (and nights), thousands of phone calls and emails, a lot of travelling and driving, different body clocks (gig days and non-gig days) and fluctuating (seasonal) income.

Firstly, you have to find the gigs and the agencies you need to go through and make contact with venue owners. Private function work is a different matter, as much of it comes through agencies – although over time, more bookings occur from direct client approaches. Whichever work you aim for, you will require a promo pack and an online version that can be emailed along with links to social media and audio/video content, and having an online presence is imperative. Always have business cards at hand, and draw up a contract for functions and private bookings: there are numerous templates online, or you can use an MU-designed one if you're a member. Also, be aware of the tax and national insurance implications of the band earning money. Treat it as a business: if you don't take it seriously, why should anyone take you seriously?

Take a good look at what the band does, how it looks and sounds and decide what you need to maximise your gigging potential. Do you need two (or more) different repertoires of material in order to cope with the different types of gigs you may be asked to perform? Will you offer different band formats, from a duo (with/without backing tracks) through to a trio and the full band line-up? Many bands do this to cater for the vast differences in client budget and to take as much work as possible and some offer genre-specific tributes too.

It pays to know typical fees for each sort of gig and price the band accordingly. Your band is a product in a busy marketplace, so you have to be competitive. There are thousands of bands out there: do you have a unique selling point? Be aware of the different audiences you may perform to: playing a set of current chart hits won't necessarily fill the dance floor if the majority of the audience are over 50.

Finally, don't assume that having amazing gear and an amazing video online can replace talent, sounding good and entertaining your audience. Never underestimate the power of the 3 Rs: reputation, rebooking and recommendation. See you next month.

STEVE LAWSON

"DELAY-LAY-LAY-LAY..." WARBLES EFFECTS BOSS LAWSON

Effects can be grouped, broadly, into a few camps: there are time-based effects (delay, reverb, looping), pitch-based effects (octave, whammy, chorus), amplitude effects (distortion, overdrive, gain) and filters (envelope, EQ, wah).

Let's look at one aspect of the first of those today – delay pedals. As usual, there are a few different variations available to us: analogue, digital and even tape delay. Tape delay was the earliest variant, which, while not very portable and rather high maintenance, actually allowed for quite a wide range of options. If modified, it could do long delays, much longer than were mostly available in the analogue delay pedals that followed. If you ever get the chance to play with a tape-delay machine, jump at it – it's all kinds of fun, and can be a useful way to visualise what's actually happening with a delay signal. The Watkins Copicat is probably the most famous of the tape delay units: they've recently released a digital version that emulates the sound of the original.

Analogue delays have, thanks to the tech involved, much shorter delay times than are possible with a tape delay, but as they were based on tiny analogue processing chips, they could fit inside pedals and were thus much more useful on stage. Analogue delays have a distinctive sound thanks to the low pass filter they employ (to remove the anti-aliasing effect from the sound, electronics nerds) and after a few years in the wilderness are back with a flourish on the boutique pedal market. Their analogue chips are prized for the weirdly desirable results they cause if you mess with the audio. The Way Huge Supa Puss analogue delay stretches what's possible beyond breaking point for some seriously gnarly sounds (check out the demos on YouTube).

By far the most versatile of our standard delay types is digital delay. Suddenly, we could have flawless reproduction of the sound going in, much longer delay times, and all the malleability that comes with what is effectively a short sample that can be manipulated in whichever way you like. They are often upgradable (the classic TC Electronic 2290 Delay was upgradable to 32 seconds, and became a key component in Robert Fripp's soundscapes rig) and integrated well into the work of multi-effects units when that trend first hit in the late '80s.

As usual, the choice is yours. Choosing an actual tape delay, rather than a modelled version, is largely a performance decision rather than a sonic one. They look great, and their unpredictability can result in some wonderful unique moments on stage if you get deep into warping the sound via speed controls and varying the length of the tape.

So many classic delay sounds are from analogue pedals, including the slapback surf guitar of the '60s, and pretty much any sound where the delays are being seriously mangled (tweaking the delay time and feedback can give some amazing synth-like squeals). If you're going to use an analogue delay, you may want to keep it up at hand height for more tweakability: try leaving a note ringing and turning the delay time control to see what happens. Digital delays are best for those Dave Gilmour-esque clean repeats, and Brian May's later layered harmony solos (he started out with tape delay). Long, clean repeats are the order of the day.

As always, modelling can sometimes give us access to the best of all of these, as we'll explore in an upcoming column. Until then, have fun with your toys.

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